Kumar Ramakrishna • See Seng Tan
Editors

AFTER BALI

The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia

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Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

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Foreword

The terrorist attacks on the Indonesian island resort of Bali on 12 October 2002 and the car bombing of the J. W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta on 5 August 2003 seem to have persuaded many Western governments, analysts and media professionals that Southeast Asia has become a "terrorist haven". Such a perception is not new. It began to develop after US-led Coalition forces had routed the radical Taliban regime in Afghanistan that had been providing sanctuary to the Al Qaeda terrorist network implicated in the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. The conventional wisdom held then that as Southeast Asia was home to one-fifth of the world's one billion Muslims, and there were radical Islamist groups in the region, it was only to be expected that the region would become the "second front" in the war on terror. The Bali and Marriott attacks, that many believe were carried out by Jemaah Islamiyah, a regional terrorist network suspected of links with Al Qaeda, have, to external observers, only confirmed that the "second front" appellation is a well justified one.

However, are Western pundits accurate in their assessment that Southeast Asia really has become a "base" for Al Qaeda as well as a "hotbed of terrorism"? Specifically, do all Islamist militant movements in the region take their orders from Osama bin Laden, or do they have separate, far less ambitious agendas that do not necessarily fit in with the messianic global *jihad* programme of Al Qaeda and JI? What role has the global media played in interpreting terrorist patterns in Southeast Asia for a wider audience? Additionally, what has been the impact of Southeast Asian governance, as well as US policies themselves, on the development of Southeast Asian Islamist radicalism? These are some of the key themes that were addressed at a Workshop entitled "After Bali: The Threat of Terrorism in Southeast Asia", held in Singapore between 27 and 28 January 2003. To engage with these issues, the Workshop organizers identified and brought together experienced Islamic scholars, analysts, police professionals and journalists familiar with the finer nuances of Southeast Asian radical Islam and the operational environment. The aim was to provide a more precise, "bottom-up" analysis of the true extent of the terror threat in

Southeast Asia. Most of the Workshop papers have now been revised, edited and presented in this volume. We believe that they will not only make for thought-provoking reading, but importantly provide interested readers with a much more balanced perspective on the issue of whether Southeast Asia is the second front, or just one important front among many, in the war on terror.

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Williams has a BA Honours in Political Science and a Masters Degree with Honours in Criminology — both from the University of Melbourne. He has worked and lectured internationally on terrorism-related issues for more than 20 years, and has run an undergraduate level course at the Australian National University since 1996. In 2002, this course was supplemented by a Masters elective in "Terrorism and Counterterrorism", available to students pursuing Masters degrees in International Relations, Political Science and Strategic Studies.

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Challenges & Prospects for Cooperative Security and Prosperity (1999), and *India and ASEAN: The Growing Partnership for the 21st Century* (2000), *The European Union, United States and ASEAN: Challenges and Prospects for Cooperative Engagement in the 21st Century*, which was published by ASEAN Academic Press, London in 2002, and numerous articles in local, regional, and international journals. His teaching, research, and publications are largely in the area of strategic studies, big power relations in the Asia-Pacific region, ASEAN regionalism, and Malaysian politics, security, and foreign policy.

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Is Southeast Asia a "Terrorist Haven"?

Kumar Ramakrishna and See Seng Tan

On 12 October 2002, bomb blasts rocked two exclusive Bali nightspots frequented by Australian and European clientele. The perpetrators of the bombings, as investigations subsequently confirmed, belonged to a region-wide clandestine radical Islamist group known as Jemaah Islamiyah (JI or "Islamic community"). The devastation at the Paddy's Bar and Sari night-club — Bali's "Twin Towers", according to some pundits, in a reference to the 11 September 2001 terror attacks that *inter alia*, brought down the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York — proved horrific: 202 dead, most of whom were Australian. Ominously, it emerged that the Bali attacks had involved suicide bombing.[1] Bali proved to be the most devastating terrorist strike in the world since 9/11. It came a mere ten months after a previous JI plot to blow up American and other Western targets in Singapore in December 2001, a strike that would almost certainly have killed scores of people, had been foiled.[2] Subsequently, in 2003, a series of smaller scale bomb attacks in the southern Philippines and Indonesia culminated in the 5 August 2003 car bombing of the American-owned J. W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. This time, 11 people were killed and about 150 injured.[3] Indonesian police investigations quickly uncovered the role of yet another suicide bomber, Asmar Lanti Sani, recruited, again, by JI. Ominously, investigations suggested that had Sani not panicked at the approach of security guards and detonated his bomb prematurely, he might have killed 200 people — a similar number as the Bali

death toll — in the Marriott.[4] At the time of writing, Indonesian police were searching for explosives that documents seized in Jakarta and Semarang, Java in July 2003 had indicated were to be used in future terrorist operations in the Indonesian capital.[5] In addition, regional intelligence services believe that JI has set up a special unit, Laskar Khos — led by an experienced Indonesian militant named Zulkarnaen — comprising specially indoctrinated and trained operatives capable of carrying out terrorist assaults, including suicide attacks. It is believed that Asmar Lanti Sani may have been a Laskar Khos member.[6] Some intelligence officials worry that Laskar Khos may be subdivided into three to four sub-units, and may yet be deployed against an "array of targets identified with the US, or its Western and Asian allies".[7]

It is little wonder therefore that the international media have pronounced Southeast Asia "a terrorist haven", thanks to the machinations of JI and its putative sponsor, the transnational, borderless Al Qaeda terrorist network led by Osama bin Laden.[8] The propagation of such a perception has had tangible economic implications for a region only just recovering from the Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998. The important tourism industry, for instance, has been adversely affected by travel advisories issued by many Western governments. The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), after the Bali attacks, posted travel advisories to tourists warning that popular Southeast Asian tourist destinations such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia were subject to a "continuing threat from terrorism throughout Southeast Asia". Following the Marriott attack, moreover, the FCO advised against "non-essential travel to Indonesia".[9] Even after the capture of JI operational leader Riduan Isamudin alias Hambali in Thailand on 11 August 2003, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage warned that "a general threat" still existed.[10] Australian and American intelligence officials even charged that Southeast Asian governments were "not doing enough to counter the threat of extremist groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah".[11]

Deconstructing the Discourse of Blame

This book seeks to challenge the prevailing discourse of blame. It asks three broad questions. First, while it is undeniable that a terror threat certainly exists in Southeast Asia, is it really accurate to suggest that the region is a "terrorist haven" and the "second front" in the global war on terror?[12] Second, to what extent are Southeast Asian states to blame for the continuing terrorist problem in the region? Third, to what extent is US foreign policy responsible for

contributing directly to both the terror threat and the concomitant circumspection of the regional response to it? This volume seeks to ground its analysis by constructing essentially a "bottom-up" middle-range perspective on the issue of terrorism in Southeast Asia. It is "bottom-up" because it has brought together many specialists based within, or frequent visitors to, Southeast Asia who have been following regional trends at close hand. It is middle-range because the editors recognise that any prescriptions for coping with the terrorist threat within the region must be tailored specifically to regional and even national realities and conditions. There can be no "one size fits all" counter-terror strategy applicable equally across geographical domains. In short the volume offers a long overdue, Southeast Asian-generated, nuanced corrective to existing "top-down" macro-analyses of the war on terror in the region. Usually devised in the West and popularised directly or indirectly by the Western news media, such top-down analyses of the terrorist threat in the region tend to gloss over or ignore the complex multi-layered contexts within which Southeast Asian governments have had to combat terrorism. This is precisely why a counter-terror strategy aimed at reducing the terror threat in Southeast Asia, devised from the bottom up by Southeast Asian specialists, promises better returns than a grand scheme devised in abstract in the West and imposed upon the region.

It is this very "bottom-up" analytical approach that as we shall see, uncovers the broad if at times implicit concern in the following pages, that the highly militarised orientation of the American response to the war on terror may not at all be adequate in neutralising the threat within Southeast Asia. It may even have the direct opposite effect. The embers of radical Islamist terrorism can only be doused by the adoption of a comprehensive approach requiring the addressing of a host of real or perceived social, economic, political and ultimately, ideological challenges. As one aim this chapter will outline such a bottom-up counter-terror strategy for Southeast Asia.

However, as a second aim this introductory chapter, drawing on the insights of the essays in this volume, will engage with the burning question as to whether Southeast Asia has indeed become a "hotbed of terrorism". This requires closer analysis of six key issues. First, we must examine the trajectory of political Islam in the region and its ideological affinity, if any, for terrorism. Second, we must analyse the extremely thorny issue of the so-called "links" between Al Qaeda and JI, as well as the wider problem of evaluating evidence of terrorist activity within the region. Third, the role of the global media in interpreting terrorism in Southeast Asia for the wider international audience must be subjected to closer scrutiny. Fourth, the prevailing tendency of much

US strategic analysis to regard Southeast Asia as the so-called "second front" in the war on terror must undergo critical re-examination. Fifth, we have to engage with the oft-heard argument that Southeast Asian governments, for a variety of reasons, contribute to very the terrorist threat they seek to neutralize. Finally, we must also lay bare how US policies and actions elsewhere have a very direct impact on the terrorism problem within the region.

Political Islam[13] in Southeast Asia

First, to suggest that Southeast Asia has become a hotbed of terrorism of the JI and Al Qaeda variety is to suggest, at root, that a highly virulent, radicalised political Islam holds sway within the region. This in turn implies that many Southeast Asian Muslims concur that they can only practise their faith within an Islamic social and political framework and that to attain this goal *jihad*, defined as violent struggle, including terrorism against regional governments and their Western, especially American allies, would be justified. Certainly, at face value, such a contention might seem reasonable which, as a recent study suggests, US allies and strategic partners in Southeast Asia take quite seriously.[14] After all, alleged JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir, who has made no secret of his call to establish an Islamic state within Indonesia, saw his book *Dakwah and Jihad* sell enough copies within Indonesia to merit a second print run within months of its release in February 2003. In it he writes:[15]

> Even if one were to die as a result of this struggle, his death would not be in vain as he will be a martyr and be amply rewarded in heaven.

However, does the apparent popularity of radical Islamist publications such as *Dakwah and Jihad* demonstrate the widespread acceptability within Indonesia, and perhaps Southeast Asia, of the Bashir vision? In this volume, renowned Indonesian Islamic scholar Azyumardi Azra (Chapter 1) argues forcefully that despite the influence of the puritanical Middle Eastern strains of Islam that permeated the region in the past and continues to do so today, Southeast Asian Islam has retained its traditional peaceful and tolerant characteristics. He points out that while there has certainly been increasing evidence of Islamic consciousness throughout the region, as evidenced by dress and other social habits, as well as the emergence of Islamic financial and educational institutions, these developments are not to be equated with extremism and violence. Azra argues that the essential thrust of Islamic fundamentalism is to rejuvenate the faith by returning to the "pure and pristine Islam

as practised by Prophet Muhammad and his companions (the salafs)". This is why most Islamic fundamentalist movements are called Salafiyyah. Azra, however makes the important point that not all Salafiyyah movements are violent. He makes a distinction between "classic Salafiyyah" and "neo-Salafiyyah"; or "peaceful Salafiyyah" and "radical Salafiyyah". He adds that the Wahhabi movement that emerged in 18th century Arabia could be considered as "both classic and radical Salafiyyah", as it believed that Salafiyyah principles could only be reapplied within Arab society by force. Importantly, Azra argues that neo-Salafiyyah movements emerged in the modern context of "harsh encounters between Muslim societies and Western colonial powers from the 17th century onwards". Hence "the external factors — associated mainly with the Western world — that could incite radicalism increasingly became more dominant". Azra brings his analysis up to date by pointing out that it is the neo-Salafiyyah ideological thread that has caused many Muslims all over the world to develop an adversarial mindset toward the West, accusing it of seeking to subjugate the Islamic world. It is such a mindset that fosters a susceptibility to conspiracy theories about the West, especially the US. Hence, rather than a widespread commitment to radical Islamist ideals, it is the persistence of a conspiracy mindset amongst segments of the Indonesian body politic that may help explain the apparent popularity of radical publications like Bashir's *Dakwah and Jihad*.

Following Azra, Ramakrishna (Chapter 14) argues that a real cause for concern within Southeast Asia is not Salafism per se but neo-Salafism, which blends the return-to-roots fundamentalism of traditional Salafism with "the additional ideational thread of an Islam under siege from Christian, Zionist and secular forces". He adds that one utterly crucial consequence of neo-Salafism has been the propagation of a rigid, inflexible, "us-versus-them" worldview by political parties like Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) in Malaysia as well as social organisations like "Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Komite Pengerakan Syariat Islam (KPSI), Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) and Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia". He avers that while "it is true that such political parties and social organisations appear willing to attain their Islamist agendas gradually by working peacefully within existing political systems, the problem is that the dividing line between neo-Salafism and violent radical Salafism is rather thin". He suggests that this is why several MMI leaders have had close links with JI and other radical Islamist, or more precisely, radical Salafiyyah groups in Indonesia, and there have even been contacts between senior PAS leaders and individuals who have had some connection to militant activities in the region.[16] More evidence of the reality that a "neo-Salafiyyah ideological milieu

can be hospitable to the radical Salafiyyah agenda" is evidenced by the fact that the radical al Mukmin *pesantren* associated with Abu Bakar Bashir, and which has produced many of the Indonesian JI militants implicated in terror attacks across the region, has been funded not just by student fees but "donations from the surrounding community".[17] Hence, Ramakrishna emphasises that "while neo-Salafiyyah ideology may not in and of itself promote violence directly, it certainly engenders an exclusionist mindset that may prove readily radicalisable in certain circumstances."

Patricia Martinez (Chapter 2), another well-known Southeast Asian Islamic scholar, likewise asserts that both "militants like Osama bin Laden" and "Muslims with a fundamentalist orientation", which from the context of her article would imply arguably Muslims holding neo-Salafiyyah perspectives, tend to envisage an Islamic social order in which the world is perceived in "sharp dichotomies: the way of heedlessness and the way of submission to Islam are seen as institutionalised in the existence of Islamic and non-Islamic political entities", namely the "territory of war (*dar al harb*)" and the "territory of Islam (*dar al islam*)."[18] Martinez adds that the struggle to expand Islam's space "and thus of peace and social order" is the *jihad*. She proceeds in these pages to "deconstruct" *jihad*, a key concept that has been exploited by JI ideologues calling for armed struggle to set up an Islamic state in the region. Martinez argues that the term *jihad* derived from *jahada,* which means to strive, exert or struggle against a visible enemy, the devil or oneself. She points out that while *jihad* is "never used to mean warfare in the Quran, its connotation with *qital* (which means 'fighting') in early Muslim history and in the Quran — where it appears in 167 verses — was to legitimate warfare" for the expansion of the Muslim empire until the end of the Umayyad caliphate in 750. After 750, "without expansion as a main cause, Muslims became introspective, turning their attention to the internal ordering of their own society". Accordingly, "more emphasis began to be placed on the peaceful spiritual quest", even though, as she points out, "the concept of religiously sanctioned warfare remained 'on the books' to be invoked if needed".

Martinez shows that by the 20th century, enormously influential Islamist radicals such as Sayyid Qutb reinterpreted and couched *jihad* in a "profoundly polemical and furious anti-American and anti-Western idiom" as a call for Islamic world revolution. She notes that the Gulf War of 1991, "Western efforts to reorder the Middle East, defend Israel, root out Al-Qaeda and to overthrow Saddam Hussein", had the effect of reinforcing "Qutb's indictments of the West as the enemy of Islam". She makes two worrying observations: first, the modern radical Islamist reinterpretation of *jihad* as world

revolution to establish a new Islamic global hegemony ignores the strict Quranic injunctions against harming women, children or civilians. This may help explain why one of the worrying features of the radical Islamist "new terrorism" is its apparent indifference to mass civilian casualties.[19] Second, within Southeast Asia, she laments that many Muslims appear caught in a "core-periphery dynamic" that sees Middle Eastern Islam as defining what is "authentic and best". This increases their susceptibility to the heavily Middle-Eastern influenced neo-Salafiyyah paradigm that the West and the US in particular are waging a new crusade against Islam. Thus for many impressionable young Muslims it is but a small step to the next level of buying into the radical Salafiyyah claim that "militant *jihad*" would be a "righteous", "legitimate" and "defensive" Islamic response to a powerful external threat.

Al Qaeda, JI and Southeast Asian Islamist Militancy

This brings us to the issue of ascertaining the operational configuration of radical Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia. In this respect, the burning question must be: what has been the precise role of Al Qaeda and what has been the nature of the "links" between it and JI? Carl Thayer is certainly right to caution against being "too quick to blame every incident on Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda", especially when "there was no evidence of such links" and an "outrage", presumably including a terrorist incident, "was more likely to be the work of local groups or criminals".[20] On the other hand, however, it would be equally erroneous to hold that Al Qaeda has not been involved in the region at all. In this volume, respected terrorism analyst Clive Williams (Chapter 3) elucidates the precise typology of the so-called "links" between Al Qaeda and Southeast Asia. Williams argues that the "links from, or with, Al Qaeda" can take several kinds, including:

- Al Qaeda funding for a spiritual leader's activities.
- Al Qaeda providing training in Afghanistan, Pakistan or elsewhere.
- Al Qaeda providing trainers and experts at a local level.
- Al Qaeda financing of regional operational activities.
- Al Qaeda financing of regional logistic support, such as weapons and explosives.
- Al Qaeda requesting a regional operation.

Williams adds that other "links that bond or tie" are:

- Shared combat or religious or training experiences in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Mindanao.

- Both parties providing sanctuary for wanted individuals.
- Meetings of activists to exchange views.
- Regional groups' support for Al Qaeda operations.

The upshot of all this, of course, is that not all "links" between Al Qaeda and Southeast Asian radical Islamist groups, or between the regional groups themselves are of the same kind or quality. While JI for instance, may have had closer contact and association with Al Qaeda, as Williams observes, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) in Aceh, is driven by local issues essentially, and has had only "marginal association" with Osama bin Laden. Williams adds that a major problem facing the majority of academics engaged in terrorism analysis is that they have access to only a "small percentage" of the total information available. Intelligence agencies have total control of the relevant data and as is well known, rarely see it fit to share such information with one another, let alone academics. Moreover, even when intelligence or other government officials are prepared to provide data to journalists or academics, "it is usually off-the-record and only to those selected individuals who can be trusted to accurately portray what they have been told, without them raising difficult or contentious issues." Moreover, "less knowledgeable government officials will, for various motives", provide "unofficial 'background' briefings or leak classified material to journalists". The danger here is that "they may be pushing a particular inaccurate point of view", something, Williams observes, "is very common in Indonesia and the Philippines". Williams thus advises analysts or journalists against "quoting of anonymous sources, or quoting information that cannot be checked against other sources". In like vein, the International Crisis Group, in its most recent report on JI, acknowledged the danger of detained militants giving "misleading information to interrogators". It thus claims to ensure that through "cross-checking different accounts of the same incident", bias or inaccuracy is reduced, and a "reasonably reliable description of events" attained.[21]

Very much in line with Williams' injunction, and Thayer's warning, not to associate uncritically every Southeast Asian radical Islamist group or activity with Al Qaeda, is the essay by Andrew Tan (Chapter 4) on the roots of the very important Moro insurgency in Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The key question Tan asks is the extent to which the problem of Muslim separatism in Mindanao has been instigated or exploited by Al Qaeda and JI. The picture that emerges is a complex one indeed. Tan demonstrates that rather than being externally driven, the Moro rebellion in fact has had enduring indigenous historical, political, economic and social causes. Fundamental

grievances driving Muslims in the south into the ranks of the Abu Sayyaf Group and particularly the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) include "Moro landlessness, poverty, unemployment, widespread discrimination and Catholic militia abuses". Tan notes that while various Moro rebel groups such as the MILF have accepted foreign assistance, including Al Qaeda funding and training, and Islam has served as a focal point of resistance to the central government, the Moro struggle is principally a nationalist and territorial one. Tan cautions that given the complex nature of the Moro rebellion and the presence of fundamental grievances, "not every Muslim rebel in the region" should be confused "for a dedicated Al Qaeda operative". Nevertheless, Tan takes care to point out that there is "evidence that some MILF factions have continued to maintain links with the Al Qaeda-linked Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) which carried out the deadly 12 October 2002 Bali attack, even to the extent of carrying out operations for it as well as providing refuge and training for JI operatives on the run from authorities in the region". In similar vein, Zachary Abuza observes in his chapter that Al Qaeda has sought to get "groups such as the MILF, which had primarily national-agendas to think and act internationally", by persuading their leaders of "the benefits of linking up to an international network". Ramakrishna suggests that JI, through its loose Rabitatul Mujahidin coalition in Southeast Asia, has sought to engage the MILF in the pursuit a pan-regional radical Islamist agenda as well. Nevertheless, Tan believes that with the death in August 2003 of MILF leader Hashim Selamat, who had well documented personal ties with Osama bin Laden, the organisation may adhere more strongly to a nationalist line as the new leader, Murad Ebrahim, lacks an affinity for the pan-Southeast Asian Islamic vision.

The Moro example provides evidence that while conflicts in Southeast Asia involving Muslim separatists may well have indigenous roots, both Al Qaeda and JI constantly seek opportunities to transnationalise them. Hence while one should be careful not to label every Muslim rebel a dedicated Al Qaeda operative, perhaps one should watch for signs that he is being co-opted into becoming one. Zachary Abuza (Chapter 6) notes that the Maluku fighting between Christians and Muslims attracted "radical Islamists from around the Muslim world", including Al Qaeda. He recounts one informant explaining that Jafar Umar Thalib's Laskar Jihad militia "maintain contact with the international Mujahidin network, including Osama bin Laden's group." Moreover, whenever a "*jihad* is in force, [bin Laden's] network provides money and weapons and all tools needed for the *jihad*, and they mobilise fighters to go to the *jihad* area". Apparently, in the case of the Maluku fighting, the foreign jihadi contingent included "Afghans, Pakistanis and Malays".

Osama bin Laden sent two of his lieutenants to Ambon as well. For his part, Rohan Gunaratna (Chapter 5) observes that Al Qaeda continually seeks "lands of *jihad*" to set up a presence and co-opt indigenous leaders, as it has done in the southern Philippines, the Pankishi Valley in Georgia, Algeria and other places. This, he adds, was "particularly the case in Southeast Asia".

It would appear, moreover, that JI, like Al Qaeda, seeks to develop greater synergistic "links" with regional Muslim separatists. Ramakrishna points out that "the continuing political, religious and socioeconomic repression by Yangon of the Rohingya Muslims in the Arakan region contiguous to Bangladesh, has generated support for the extremist Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), which seeks to set up and Islamic Republic in the Arakan". Both he and Abuza suggest that some JI militants have sought refuge amongst the Rohingya refugee community within neighbouring Bangladesh. Tellingly, the RSO and another less militant Rohingya body, the Arakan Rohingya Nationalist Organisation (ARNO), have attended the JI's Rabitatul Mujahidin meetings. On the other hand, Leonard Sebastian (Chapter 16) is forthright in maintaining that any endeavour to "link GAM with the Al Qaeda would founder on lack of evidence". Sebastian points out that while Al Qaeda senior leader Ayman Al Zawahiri certainly visited Aceh in June 2000, GAM was not interested in granting his request to set up Al Qaeda training bases in Aceh. Furthermore, while the Indonesian police alleged that GAM had been involved in terrorist activities such as the Jakarta Stock Exchange bombing in 2000, the Cijantung Mall attack in South Jakarta in 2001 and a series of bombings in Medan, North Sumatra, Sebastian avers that GAM's "intention is to set up an independent Sultanate in Aceh". It has little interest in Al Qaeda's global *jihad* cause and is keen only in "fighting for independence from Indonesian rule". Furthermore, while Aceh may be a conservative Muslim province, "its society is pluralistic and minorities are well accepted and protected and therefore unlikely to gravitate to the insular Islamic ideologies championed by the groups like Al Qaeda". Thus Sebastian does not believe that Jakarta, which mounted a new military offensive on 19 May 2003 to stamp out the Aceh rebellion, will be successful in persuading the United Nations to designate GAM a terrorist group, thereby obligating member states to freeze its assets. Nevertheless, it might be prudent to remember that GAM was represented at the JI's Rabitatul Mujahidin meeting in Malaysia in 1999.[22] Thus, to reiterate, while not every Muslim separatist movement in Southeast Asia has Al Qaeda or for that matter JI in the background orchestrating developments, that does not mean that such a scenario can never develop at some point. Watchfulness is called for.

Moreover, while Al Qaeda may, as Thayer suggests, not be behind everything, it has certainly been behind some things in Southeast Asia. Leading Al Qaeda expert Rohan Gunaratna explains that despite the setbacks suffered by Al Qaeda since the commencement of Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001 in Afghanistan, the network is far from finished. Instead, the "post-9/11 Al Qaeda cells are more clandestine, compact and self-contained, thus harder to detect and disrupt". In addition, the network has decentralised and dispersed its operations from Afghanistan outward to various regions, including Southeast Asia, where its relationship with JI has assumed greater importance. Within Southeast Asia, Gunaratana argues, despite "partial government successes and failures against terrorist networks, Al Qaeda remains a threat to Southeast Asian governments and societies". This is because "the organisation's leadership; support (propaganda, recruitment, fundraising, procurement, transportation, safe houses); and operational (surveillance, attack) organs remain fully functional". Importantly, Gunaratna claims that JI, the most important partner of Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian network, has taken on the role of its "mother group" within the region. He adds that "JI Indonesia is clearly the distinct node of the Al Qaeda network in the region", and that JI "as an organisation is still functional in Indonesia". In an important contribution to the literature, moreover, Gunaratna traces in detail how Al Qaeda and JI operatives planned and executed the Bali attacks.

Reinforcing Gunaratna's argument, Zachary Abuza insists that "JI must be seen as an integral part of Al Qaeda". The strength of Abuza's essay is the detail he provides on the various modalities by which Al Qaeda funds have been channeled to radical Islamist groups in the region. In this connection, Abuza identifies three important Saudi-based charities that have played a role in financing militant activities in the region: "the Islamic International Relief Organisation (IIRO), which is part of the Muslim World League, a fully Saudi state-funded organisation, the al Haramain Islamic Foundation, also based in Saudi Arabia, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth". Abuza asserts that while most of the Saudi money is for "mosque construction, charities, cultural centres, and NGOs, much of the money is diverted to clandestine activities". He shows how the IIRO in the Philippines, for example, was used by bin Laden to "distribute funds for the purchase of arms and other logistical requirements of the Abu Sayyaf and MILF". As far as Indonesia is concerned, Abuza suggests that KOMPAK, a charity associated with the hardline DDII, has played a role in funding radical Islamist militancy. For example, KOMPAK produced propaganda and recruitment videos for Laskar Jundullah, "emphasising both their military strength and sense of Muslim persecution". Abuza

adds that Al Qaeda established "not just charities, but also corporate entities" as part of its funding infrastructure in the region. While front companies were set up to purchase materials or mask terrorist-related activities, additional companies were set up with Al Qaeda funds for initial capitalisation, but their primary purpose was for "revenue generation". Abuza observes that the most important front companies were started up by JI's Malaysian cell in order "to channel Al Qaeda funds and procure weapons and bomb-making material".

Hence, while there are clear "links" between Al Qaeda and JI, as well as between these two networks and other radical Islamist groups in the region, these are of varying kinds and intensities. In addition, while Al Qaeda may not be behind every separatist insurgency involving Muslims, and one must be careful not to posit a transnational radical Islamist guiding intelligence where one does not exist, by the same token one must not forget that the likes of Al Qaeda and JI are keenly interested in exploiting local conflicts for their own purposes. Vigilance is necessary. Finally, as far as the principal link between Al Qaeda and JI is concerned, it may be fair to assert that while JI operatives may receive funds, and carry out operations at the explicit direction of Al Qaeda, this is not always the case. JI is an autonomous network with its own agenda that is well capable of executing its own operations without reference to Osama bin Laden. Indeed, with the capture of so many JI leaders and the attendant disruption of its internal lines of authority and communication, it is possible that a greater degree of decentralisation may be forced upon JI, with the possibility that individual cells may engage in actions that have little to do with the JI leadership, let alone Al Qaeda.[23] The operational picture in Southeast Asia is therefore very dynamic and complex.

The Role of the Global Media

Given the convoluted, constantly shifting configuration of radical Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia, it follows that understanding and interpreting its nuances accurately for a wider international audience requires a very high degree of rigour. In this respect, because the global mass media is extremely influential in shaping popular perceptions of the region and *ipso facto* the volume of inflows of much-needed foreign investments and tourist dollars, it is vitally important that journalists, especially in the West, get their analyses right. Contributor Jonathan Woodier (Chapter 7), however, himself an experienced journalist, expresses a view on this very issue that is far from sanguine. He observes that the increasing trend toward concentration of global media ownership, exemplified by the increasing consolidation of power amongst

an increasingly smaller number of players such as, for example, AOL Time Warner, Viacom and Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, is driven by economic considerations, deregulation and technological developments. This however, has not necessarily been accompanied by "an increase in quality of content and programming":

> Wherever you look in the communication media today, there is a feeling that content has become dumber and weaker as a pragmatic choice of publishers and broadcasters who have consciously selected quantity of readers over quality of content. Content looks formulaic, driven by audience research, enslaved to populism and the "dull conformity" of sensationalism.

Woodier reveals that even "news and current affairs" are not at all "immune from the general trends within the industry". He claims that British television producers for instance, a well-respected group of professionals, complain of being pressured to "create exciting, controversial or entertaining programmes, even if that means distorting the truth or misrepresenting views". Commercial and market pressures, moreover, are exacerbated by simple prejudice. Gwynne Dyer observes how "the image of Muslims that the rest of the world gets through international coverage is deeply misleading". Dyer reckons that while the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), for example, is not anti-Muslim, it has nevertheless found itself "responding to a definition of international news that makes 'violent Muslims' more newsworthy than violent people in other places". Dyer acknowledges that ultimately, this definition is rooted in an agenda "set mainly by the dominant US media". The modalities of communications technology are another factor hindering accurate, substantive news coverage. Woodier points out that television is a very powerful medium of influence in Asia, but that it emphasizes "perceptions", "pictures and emotions" over analysis. Hence television news coverage, already encumbered by the general lack of interest in foreign news, especially in the US and UK, tends to focus on the stories "that make for eye-catching headlines", such as 9/11, the Bali attacks, and more recently, the Marriott blasts. There are, Woodier laments, too few "attempts to put stories into perspective".

For his part, well-known Thai journalist Kavi Chongkittavorn (Chapter 8) identifies "fierce competition" amongst powerful "media establishments" such as Cable News Network (CNN), *The New York Times, The Asian Wall Street Journal, Time, The Washington Post* and *Newsweek* as driving their coverage of terrorism in Southeast Asia. Chongkittavorn, like Woodier, observes that to capture "the Western, especially American, attention span", US media players have "constantly been searching for new angles and leads" to maintain

the edge over their rivals. To be sure, this has sometimes produced somewhat exaggerated, not altogether accurate reporting. Chongkittavorn recounts how one major international newspaper proclaimed on 7 November 2002 that the Bali bombings had been planned at a January 2002 meeting in southern Thailand. Following a hue and cry from the Thai authorities, the newspaper backtracked on 25 November, stipulating more precisely that according to intelligence sources, it was believed that the Bali attacks had been planned in Thailand. Chongkittavorn acknowledges that the Western media have to a large extent shaped "an agenda for the Southeast Asian media, Thailand in particular, as well as policy makers in the region". It is such power, however, to shape the prevailing orthodoxy that is so problematic. Ramakrishna observes elsewhere that the enormously influential American media tend to see Southeast Asia as a "monolithic 'second front' in the war on terror, with coverage skewed towards a focus on terror plots, terror attacks and detentions of alleged terrorists with links to Al-Qaeda". He notes:

> The richness and diversity of Southeast Asia and regional Islam is virtually ignored. The result: American policy-makers and investors conclude that the region is a hotbed of terrorists and Southeast Asian Muslims are a potential fifth column awaiting orders from Osama bin Laden.[24]

That Ramakrishna is not exaggerating is borne out by a commentary by two leading American commentators who attempted to impose in a deductive, top-down manner a model of "militant Islam" divorced from empirical realities on the ground. They alleged in an article in *The New York Post* soon after the Bali bombings that GAM "may be an Al Qaeda affiliate", whose goal, along with "other radicals", is "to turn the world's most populous Muslim country into an extremist Islamic state by 2003".[25] As we have noted, it would be utterly incorrect to assume an exact confluence of aims between GAM and JI, let alone between GAM and Al Qaeda. GAM's goals are far more sharply defined, and more to do with Acehnese nationalism rather than transnational global *jihad*.

Southeast Asia and the "Second Front" Discourse

Nevertheless, empirical nuances have been lost in Washington's grand strategic perspective. It is abundantly clear that US officials see Southeast Asia through the prism of 9/11, Al Qaeda and the global war on terror. This is why US Secretary of State Colin Powell embarked on his six-nation tour of Southeast Asia in late July 2002 to "press for tougher action and new cooperative pacts on the 'second front' in the counter-terrorism campaign".[26] There are however

two problems with the prevailing "second front discourse" that dominates discussions of the terrorism problem in Southeast Asia. First, the so-called "new terrorism" defined by religious extremism has not reared its head in Southeast Asia alone. The Middle East, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia, Japan and even Europe and the US have had their share of such incidents as well.[27] Moreover, even after the Bali and Marriott attacks, the recrudescence of Taliban activity in Afghanistan,[28] the bombings in Mumbai in late August 2003,[29] the continuing suicide attacks in Israel, and the emergence of radical Islamist terrorist activity in US-occupied Iraq[30] compel one to question why Southeast Asia should be regarded as the second front in the war on terror at all. Ajay Sahni argues with great perspicacity elsewhere that the conceptual notion of a geographically demarcated "locus of terrorism" may in fact be very misleading. He asks rhetorically:

> How are we to locate the locus? Is it the region of the largest concentration of terrorists? Or of their leadership? Or of their activities? . . . The concentration of terrorist groups in organised "training camps" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, for instance was a deceptive aberration . . . The dispersed patterns that have emerged after the US campaign against the Al-Qaeda-Taliban combine in Afghanistan, in fact, are more characteristic of the nature of terrorist mobilisation and movement and, while transient concentrations of terrorist operatives and leaders may, from time to time, be evidenced, these are immensely fluid and highly unpredictable manifestations.[31]

Sahni argues persuasively that there is little conceptual rigour driving the widely used "locus of terrorism" heuristic. If, for instance, one were to use "the most devastating terrorist actions" as a key variable in determining the locus, then Bali aside, one could conceivably argue even more persuasively that the locus of terrorism should be in Washington and New York, especially after 9/11.[32] In this regard, the propensity of some in the West to label certain regions as "terrorist hotspots" and not others explains why Chongkittavorn warns that the issuing of travel advisories based on unconfirmed hearsay might generate resentment in a region dependent on tourism, thereby harming ASEAN-US co-operation in the counter-terror war. In a similar vein, other analysts have speculated that Canberra's issue of a travel advisory following the Bali bombings might prove inimical to ASEAN-Australia counter-terror co-operation,[33] although the successful arrests of perpetrators involved in the 12 October attack suggests otherwise. Sahni's argument, moreover, about the "immensely fluid" concentrations of terrorists and by implication, the innate difficulties of bracketing a well-defined geographical location as a static

"front", is further buttressed in these pages. Both Abuza and Ramakrishna stress that the relative inaction of the Bangladeshi government in dealing with radical Islamist extremism within its borders helps sustain terrorist activity in neighbouring Southeast Asia, and has even enabled linkages to be brokered between South Asian and Southeast Asian radical Islamists. Hence the radical Rohingya Solidarity Organisation that is part of the JI's loose Rabitatul Mujahidin regional network, has maintained close ties and received material assistance from South Asian radical Islamist groups like the Hizb-e-Islami in Afghanistan, the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin in Kashmir as well as the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh. It might well be asked, where then is the "front" in this instance: Bangladesh, South Asia or Southeast Asia? It appears disingenuous to pigeonhole Southeast Asia in particular as the second front in the global counter-terror campaign.

This brings us to the second major problem with the "second front" discourse permeating much discussion of Southeast Asia: its roots in an overall counter-terror perspective in which military power is given far too much emphasis. Sahni explains that the US-led war on terror is driven by an intrinsic conventional warfare notion of seeking out the enemy's "decisive areas" or fronts against which substantial force can be applied.[34] In like vein Ramakrishna in these pages argues that "military considerations and modes of thought" have nudged "key Bush Administration officials towards adopting what the French strategist Andre Beaufre would have called a *direct strategy* in the global war on terror":

> That is, Washington has emphasized military power as the primary instrument of what Beaufre called "total strategy", with the various legal, administrative, diplomatic, economic and financial resources of several government agencies and Coalition partners orchestrated in close support of the principal military thrust.

Ramakrishna posits that the US National Strategy for Countering Terrorism (NSCT), released in February 2003, evinces a strong direct strategic thrust. The heart of the NSCT is the so-called "4D strategy", which is dominated by the first two "D"s of defeating "terrorist organisations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control and communications; material support; and finances" and denying "further sponsorship, support, and sanctuary to terrorists" by requiring other states to "accept their responsibilities to take action against these international threats within their sovereign territory". The NSCT asserts that while Washington would work with its Coalition partners in the fight against terrorism, it would also "act

decisively to counter the threat" posed by "unwilling states" and "compel" them to "cease supporting terrorism". In fact, the military and coercive law enforcement, or what we might term military-operational, thrust of the NSCT clearly animates US counter-terror strategy in Southeast Asia: the US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism, signed in August 2002, commits the US and its ASEAN partners, *inter alia*, to improving "intelligence and terrorist financing information sharing"; developing more effective counter-terrorism policies and regimes; enhancing liaison between law enforcement agencies; joint operations; and addressing "transportation, border and immigration control challenges" to "stem effectively the flow of terrorist-related material, money and people".[35]

However, as John Gershman points out, Southeast Asia's current problems are unlikely to be resolved by a counter-terror strategy that emphasizes military solutions.[36] Ramakrishna himself castigates the US "military-operational" fixation that encourages the second front discourse in analysis of the region. He has argued recently that "it would be strategic inefficiency pure and simple to physically eliminate scattered terrorist groups without addressing the roots of the anti-Americanism that animates them". In the final analysis therefore:

> Osama bin Laden and his ideological bedfellows in Southeast Asia need to count on willing recruits for their terror plans: cut the supply of committed foot-soldiers and middle class terrorist leaderships will face severe difficulties in executing their schemes.[37]

Hence we return to the theme discussed earlier that the ideological milieu that produces radical Islamists is of the utmost importance in the counter-terror campaign in Southeast Asia. Ajay Sahni in this respect hits the nail on the head when he iterates that, rather than a "transient geographical location or concentrations of terrorist incidents, activities and movements", it is radical Islamist ideology per se that represents "the actual limits or foci of extremist Islamist terrorism".[38] It is this ideology that should be targeted. This is a crucial point to which we shall return shortly.

Are Southeast Asian Governments the "Root Cause" of Terrorism in the Region?

In fact the prevailing military-operational paradigm has funnelled analysis along the single dimension of the alleged deficiencies of regional and national

state responses in Southeast Asia. On the one hand, Southeast Asian governments are often criticised as being loath to co-operate with one another in counter-terrorism action. It is well known that ASEAN states still grapple with continuing bilateral tensions and suspicions.[39] This fact, however, at times takes analysis to untenable extremes. For instance, Michael Smith and David Martin Jones argue that beneath the outward rhetoric of ASEAN amity, there has been in fact a "disturbing picture of non-cooperation between ASEAN intelligence services".[40] They add that ASEAN as a regional association has tended to treat the discovery of a pan-Southeast Asian radical Islamist terrorist threat "merely as an opportunity to disclaim responsibility for the growing sense of crisis in the region by pointing the finger elsewhere and condemning the failings of their ostensible partners".[41] Moreover, they report that during its May 2002 Special Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime, ASEAN "could not agree a [sic] definition of terrorism".[42] This perspective, however, like many Western analyses, lacks nuance.

While essayists Daljit Singh and K. S. Nathan (Chapters 9 and 11, respectively) acknowledge that counter-terror co-operation in Southeast Asia (in Nathan's words) "is necessarily diluted by the rather strict adherence of member-states to the principle of national sovereignty", this has not prevented ASEAN from "moving quite steadily" in the direction of inter-state counter-terror co-operation. Besides, it might be asserted that Smith and Jones overstate the failure of ASEAN to settle on an agreed definition of terrorism in May 2002. After all, as Nathan informs us, the Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers on Terrorism, held in Kuala Lumpur a month earlier, could not arrive at a definition either. Hence ASEAN's failure to agree on the definition of terrorism has more to do with the innate complexity of the exercise than any lack of commitment to counter-terror co-operation on its part. After all, ASEAN states, as Singh tells us, are fully aware that it is in their "own vital interests" to combat terrorism because it is "not merely a danger to some innocent lives and to property":

> It is a threat to the economic well being of ASEAN countries because terrorist incidents affect the tourist industry and undermine investor confidence. Further, the JI is ultimately a threat to existing state power or territorial integrity of a number of countries, in view of its ultimate goal of setting up an Islamic caliphate embracing Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Philippines, southern Thailand and eventually Singapore and Brunei.

This is precisely why, despite the assertions of Smith and Jones of a "disturbing picture of non-cooperation between ASEAN intelligence services",

the actual empirical situation is considerably less negative. Singh shows that intra-ASEAN intelligence co-operation has been concrete and sustained on a sub-regional basis, leading to the capture of key militants such as Indonesian JI explosives expert Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi in Manila in early 2002, Singapore JI leader Mas Selamat Kastari in the Indonesian Riau archipelago in February 2003 and Arifin Ali, of the Singapore JI again, in Thailand in May 2003. It should also be recognised that the capture of JI operational chief Hambali, also in Thailand in August 2003 could not have been achieved without intelligence sharing and cooperation between several states. It might be added, moreover, that the Singaporean and Malaysian governments willingly provided video testimony of Singaporean and Malaysian JI members during the trial in Indonesia of alleged JI spiritual leader Bashir. Last and not least, ASEAN states have been co-operating very closely with external actors like the US and Australia. The US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism of August 2002, for example, commits both sides to closer intelligence exchange and co-operation.

Another example of the concerted co-operation amongst ASEAN states at the sub-regional level is mentioned by Singh, Nathan, as well as Jose T. Almonte (Chapter 10): the signing in May 2002 of an Anti-Terrorism Pact by Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, three states with porous maritime borders. According to Nathan, "the tripartite pact is aimed at (a) targeting potential terrorist threats, and (b) devising measures to tackle money-laundering, smuggling, drug-trafficking, hijacking, illegal trafficking of women and children, and piracy". In fact Smith and Jones criticise this pact for its focus on "illicit activities" such as money laundering and human smuggling, wondering in what ways these "fall under the rubric of 'anti-terrorism' ".[43] However, as Ramakrishna argues in his essay, transnational criminal activities such as money laundering and illegal people movement should be seen as part of the "functional space" that directly expedites terrorist operations. In addition, Singh argues that periodic regional-level ASEAN declarations on terrorism, such as the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism in November 2001 and the Declaration on Terrorism in November 2002 are important as they express a shared political commitment to combating the regional terrorist threat. Furthermore, in terms of regional level "practical co-operation", the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), headed by ministers of Home Affairs, forms the core of ASEAN counter-terror co-operation. The AMMTC, Singh says, permits an exchange of ideas and information on best practices in combating terrorism-related "transnational crimes like drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, sea piracy,

arms smuggling and money laundering". While there has been no lack of counter-terror activities within ASEAN, K. S. Nathan however, acknowledges that the bigger challenge for the association would be to move more boldly and aggressively to engage "in non-traditional cooperation to address non-traditional threats to regional security".

Apart from suggestions of less than optimal inter-state co-operation in the war on terror in Southeast Asia, a second oft-heard criticism is that some Southeast Asian governments have been too slow in taking decisive action against terror cells and activities within their national boundaries. Singh reckons that the state-level response to the terrorist threat has been strongest in Singapore, Malaysia and to some extent the Philippines. Additionally, Indonesia's response since the Bali attacks has been much stronger. One important reason for the variation in national responses throughout Southeast Asia is the operational context. K. S. Nathan in this respect argues that both ASEAN and the wider ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) "face major constraints in their ability to respond swiftly to acts of terrorism in Southeast Asia due to at least four factors that characterise the regional security environment":

> (1) Porous borders and generally weak immigration controls, with administrative requirements being surmounted through corruption; (2) long-standing economic and trade links between Southeast Asia and Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, many of which operate outside normal financial channels not readily monitored by governments, and which in turn have facilitated funds transfers from the Middle East and South Asia to radical groups in the region; (3) widespread criminal activity including drug trafficking in the region which in turn can facilitate the movement of resources by terrorists; and (4) the availability of large supplies of indigenously produced and imported weapons in Southeast Asia.

The reality is that not all Southeast Asian states have similar capacities to interdict the circulation of terrorist funds, material and manpower. In this connection, Indonesia and the Philippines stand out, as Jose Almonte laments, as "weak states" with incomplete administrative coverage over their extensive territories, in comparison to the strong, well-resourced states of Singapore and Malaysia. Chongkittavorn's discussion of the lack of central government coverage over the remote south suggests that Thailand may in some respects demonstrate elements of state weakness as well. Complicating state-level responses to the terrorist problem are complex bureaucratic rivalries amongst security agencies. In Indonesia, according to Leonard Sebastian, the police lack the resources as well as "an effective database of domestic radicals and their links

to international terrorist groups". Moreover, there is doubt as to whether the Indonesian military will willingly share their intelligence on domestic groups with the police. Institutional rivalries and lack of co-ordination between various Thai intelligence agencies, Chongkittavorn avers, also hamper Bangkok's counter-terror effort, while in the Philippines, Singh highlights the possibility that elements of the military may be fomenting trouble so as to undermine Manila's peace negotiations with the MILF.

Nevertheless, despite these diverse difficulties, ASEAN governments have been seeking to strengthen their respective legal and administrative counter-terror regimes. Thus Jakarta, following the Bali bombings, promulgated two emergency Presidential decrees to immediately facilitate investigations of detentions of suspected terrorists, which were subsequently passed as laws on 6 March 2003. According to Singh, these laws "confer powers on the police to detain suspected terrorists without trial, authorise the death penalty for certain terrorist acts, and allow intelligence reports to be used as evidence". In addition, according to Chongkittavorn, the new anti-terrorism decrees issued by the Thaksin government in August 2003 and tacked on to the existing Criminal Code and the Anti-Money Laundering Act, confer power on the authorities to "make arrests", detain terrorist suspects, issue search warrants or "tap suspects' phones". However, the Indonesian and Thai legislation do not empower the central governments the way the internal security laws in Singapore and Malaysia do.

The question is, should they? The issue of whether the strong state in Southeast Asia actually combats or fuels Islamist radicalism is another point worth closer scrutiny. Smith and Jones argue that state authoritarianism in the region and attendant governing ideologies emphasising national unity above all else have generated alienation amongst some Muslims that radical Islamist clerics have exploited. Hence in this sense the strong "surveillance state" in Southeast Asia has been a root cause of radical Islamist terrorism. The major problem with this viewpoint has been touched on already: not all Southeast Asian states are strong states, and Singapore, the focus of Smith and Jones' analysis, cannot be said to be typical of the rest of Southeast Asia. Again, we encounter an instance of Western analysts attempting to impose a theoretical construct onto the region, obliterating in the process important regional variations. In particular, Smith and Jones contend that "increased surveillance of the ISD (Internal Security Department) variety is part of the problem, not the solution", as "megalomaniac hyper-vigilance" generates the potential "to undermine the fabric of national security".[44] On the contrary, it can be argued with equal force, as some of the contributors to this volume

do, that a dearth of the state capacity to monitor remote areas in eastern Indonesia, the southern Philippines and southern Thailand, have allowed JI and even Al Qaeda to establish a presence. Hence, it is precisely a strong surveillance state that is needed to check the freedom, or as Ramakrishna terms it, the "functional space", of terrorist groups to operate.

Nevertheless, efforts to increase state capacity in Southeast Asia to close down terrorist functional space are not enough. These must be balanced by enhanced attempts to improve state efficiency in delivering social services as well as create more public space within which important issues of concern to the region's Muslim communities can be articulated more openly. Rizal Sukma (Chapter 15) in this vein makes the case that the real problem facing Indonesia is not radical Islam per se but rather the lack of good governance. He opines that the emergence of many radical Islamist groups in Indonesia has been due to oppressive state policy during the New Order period, as well as real and perceived political and socio-economic injustice at the current time. He warns that radical Islam might gain further ground if Jakarta fails to engineer a speedy economic recovery and construct a viable democracy based on the rule of law. Warning against reverting to a greater role of the military in the politics of the country in order to foster greater *stabilitas*, Sukma reckons that such a development would only foster a return to the repression that Indonesians do not wish to undergo yet again. As he puts it, oppression is not the answer to radicalism, and will only lead to more radicalism. Sebastian echoes this view. He asserts that Jakarta's challenge is to devise legislation and counter-terror policies able to prevent and punish terrorism — while respecting the democratic space within which strong political or religious dissent can be articulated peacefully. He feels that Jakarta's new anti-terrorism regulations seem to have achieved a balance between Indonesia's desire to preserve order, respect international anti-terrorism conventions and yet protect its fledgling democracy.

There appears to be some truth in the assertion by Smith and Jones, moreover, that the dearth of "avenues of independent thought and analysis"[45] fosters the development of closed minds that radical Islamist clerics can readily exploit. Woodier in this collection makes a similar point:

> The limited coverage of alternative perspectives by the mass media, partly because of their preparedness to bow to local controls and partly because of a process of dumbing down, clearly played a role in the failure of both Singapore and neighbour Malaysia to recognise the extent of the coherence and cohesion of the politically radicalised Islamic opposition in their own backyard.

One of the Singapore JI members, for instance, revealed that he had been attracted to JI preachers partly because other mainstream Muslim groups "had disregarded *jihad*", and he reckoned that "by preaching *jihad* JI was more complete".[46] As we shall see shortly, the development of a social and political milieu within which critical thinking can flourish may in fact be an important plank of an effective counter-terror policy.

The US Factor in Southeast Asian Counter-Terror Policy

Daljit Singh notes "Indonesia was in denial mode about the terrorist network within its borders until the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002", while Thailand's response "evolved from denial to cautious acknowledgment in May 2003". In early September 2003, moreover, there was widespread disappointment that an Indonesian court sentenced alleged JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir to only four years' jail on charges of being involved in a series of church bombings in 2000. Significantly, he was found not guilty of being JI's spiritual leader or *amir*, something that would have earned him a much stiffer sentence. While one Western analyst called the judgement a "glorified slap on the wrist",[47] other observers lamented that apart from Singapore, the other Southeast Asian states were not tackling the regional terrorist problem with sufficient vigour.[48] In a thickening of the plot, it was pointed out shortly after that in fact, Hamzah Haz, the Vice-President of Indonesia and leader of that country's largest Islamic party, the United Development Party (PPP), had been working behind the scenes to influence the outcome of the Bashir trial. There had apparently been anxiety at the highest levels in Jakarta that had Bashir been found guilty of the more serious charge of leading JI, President Megawati Sukarnoputri's government might have been obliged to close down his *pesantren* in Solo, Central Java as well as disband his MMI organisation. Not only would such action, it was feared, have alienated Muslim voters ahead of the 2004 elections, it might have even have provoked JI terror reprisals in Jakarta.[49]

Such apparent vacillation on the part of Jakarta has earned the ire of regional security analysts. One respected commentator for instance urged President Megawati to "name Jemaah Islamiyah publicly as the organisation behind the bombings that have killed hundreds". She criticised government officials for giving in to Muslims leaders who argue that the name Jemaah Islamiyah refers to the "broader Muslim community". She asserted that until Jakarta acknowledges categorically and unequivocally JI's existence, "they're not going to be able to stop it".[50] While such sentiment is understandable, it is

not entirely fair. As pointed out earlier, ASEAN governments genuinely want to deal with the radical Islamist threat, but, to use a Clauewitizian metaphor, are facing "friction" in doing so. Their counter-terror action, either singly or in concert, appears half-hearted only partly because of internal factors such as a dearth of state capacity, bureaucratic politicking, and bilateral issues such as lingering mutual tensions and occasional spats. It must be recalled that Southeast Asia is home to 230 million Muslims, "more than in all of the Arab Middle East",[51] and the interests of these Muslims have to be taken into account when national and even foreign policies are formulated. As several contributors to this volume show, a major, paradoxical factor introducing friction in the conduct of ASEAN counter-terror policy is the United States itself. Or as prominent US scholar Chalmers Johnson bluntly put it, his government's reaction to 9/11 has "made an already terrible situation worse".[52]

It is not merely that radical Islamist ideology portrays Washington as the primary enemy of Islam, though this is certainly crucial. It is that Washington's attitudes, policies and behaviour toward the Muslim world reinforce such negative stereotypes promoted by the radicals. See Seng Tan (Chapter 12) contends in these pages that the Bush Administration's counter-terror discourse, in conjunction with other ancillary security-oriented discourses — including, among others, those in missile defence[53] — is "productive" of an ideological construction of a particular variant of Islam as a dangerous "Other": as "terrorists," "enemies of America," and so on. While Tan acknowledges that this process of Otherness-making constitutes and maintains to an extent the political identity of the United States, he warns, however, that it is precisely such a discursive process that *inter alia* tends to foster a "totalising" image of Islam as an inherently problematic civilizational entity. This in turn hinders the effective analysis needed to differentiate between various streams of Islam, thereby preventing US policymakers from recognising that much of the anti-Americanism in the Muslim world is adducible to specific US policies rather than what America per se represents. Hence while the war on terror does not have to connote a clash between the West and Islam, American discursive practices, by inadvertently promoting a theologocentric construction of Islam as inherently violent and prone to terrorism, does nothing to prevent such a civilisational collision.

Evelyn Goh (Chapter 13) argues that Washington's conduct of the war on terror has adversely affected the vital "soft" foundations of its power: the appeal of American values and culture; the perception that US hegemony is benign; and the apparent legitimacy of the exercise of American power. In

particular, the Bush Administration's National Security Strategy "of strengthening primacy, intervening more assertively to protect security and interests, and adopting a more explicit ideological basis for foreign policy, can be expected to exacerbate extant problems". Goh holds that such a hard power-dominated strategic approach has undermined both the coherence of its global counter-terror coalition as well as its image with Muslim polities and societies everywhere. Ramakrishna (Chapter 14) concurs with Goh's general assessment of US strategy, pointing out that the Bush Administration's NSCT document in particular, that divides states neatly into "willing" and "reluctant" partners in the global counter-terror war is too abstract. He opines that the "reality is not reducible to simple black and white terms":

> The essential concern, even in relatively "willing" states such as Singapore and Malaysia, is that if governments are seen to be too closely aligned with the US, this would provoke an electoral and even militant Muslim backlash. The problem is that amongst Southeast Asian Muslims — both "radicals" and "moderates" — the US is generally perceived to be against Islam. In other words, there exists amongst pockets of Southeast Asian Muslims, to widely varying degrees, a modicum of sympathy for JI, even if the vast majority of Muslims deplore utterly the network's *modus operandi*.

Ramakrishna's essential point is that Washington's policies and military action, especially within Muslim theatres where US combat troops are currently deployed such as Afghanistan and Iraq, tend to inadvertently alienate local Muslim populations, thereby generating "political oxygen" that radical Islamist clerics everywhere, including Southeast Asia, have exploited to reinforce the anti-American ideological thread that animates both neo-Salafiyyah and radical Salafiyyah discourse. This in turn reinforces conspiracy theories like the one recounted in this volume by Tatik Hafidz (Chapter 17), that the "CIA and Mossad masterminded the Bali bombings to prove that terrorist networks do exist in Indonesia, so that Jakarta would be drawn into supporting the American-imposed war on terror". Within such a supercharged political and ideological context, is it not at all surprising that Jakarta feels that it must tread very carefully in sentencing radicals like Bashir; that in setting up the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism in 2003 Kuala Lumpur took pains to deny any overt "US interference" in its running; and that Thai Muslims in the southern town of Narathiwat regarded the arrests of alleged JI militants in their midst as a "gesture of appeasement to the United States, and that US President George W. Bush is bent on creating a climate of

distrust of Muslims".[54] It is in truth this increasingly powerful radical Islamist ideological paradigm — with its central exclusionist neo-Salafiyyah core — that ensures that the efforts of Southeast Asian governments are encumbered by "friction" in their counter-terror fight; a paradigm which in no small irony, Washington itself has inadvertently reinforced. It is therefore not without justification that two Singapore analysts, writing just before the 9/11 tragedy, urged that America exercise "strategic restraint" in its foreign policy, particularly towards Southeast Asia.[55]

Countering Radical Islamist Ideology

One theme that unifies the various contributions in this volume is the idea that radical Islamist ideology is the centre of gravity of the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia. This ideology is dynamic, robust, and draws its sustenance from exploitation by radicals of objective political and socio-economic grievances of Muslim communities within the region and — thanks to information technologies such as satellite news channels and importantly, the Internet — in the wider world. In this sense JI may have its roots in Indonesia, but it is no exaggeration to assert that it driven by a global *jihad* agenda that is coloured very heavily by an anti-American, anti-Western bias. Imam Samudra, the alleged field co-ordinator for the Bali attacks, under interrogation by Indonesian police, provided much insight into two aspects of JI's radical Islamist ideology: its content, and its mode of transmission.[56] In terms of content, Samudra, when asked by investigators in late November 2002 why he had planned the Bali attacks, provided an extremely detailed, telling response. This is well worth quoting in some detail as it may shed valuable light on what drives both JI and perhaps even the wider radical Islamist global network spearheaded by Al Qaeda:[57]

> To oppose the barbarity of the US army of the Cross and its allies . . . to take revenge for the pain of . . . weak men, women and babies who died without sin when thousands of tonnes of bombs were dropped in Afghanistan in September 2001 [sic] . . . during Ramadan . . . To carry out a [sic] my responsibility to wage a global *jihad* against Jews and Christians throughout the world . . . As a manifestation of Islamic solidarity between Moslems, not limited by geographic boundaries. To carry out Allah's order in the Book of Annisa, verses 74–76, which concerns the obligation to defend weak men, weak women, and innocent babies, who are always the targets of the barbarous actions of the American terrorists and their allies . . . So that the American terrorists and their allies understand that the blood of Moslems is expensive

> and valuable; and cannot be — is forbidden to be — toyed with and made a target of American terrorists and their allies. So that the [American and allied] terrorists understand how painful it is to lose a [sic] mothers, husbands, children, or other family members, which is what they have so arbitrarily inflicted on Moslems throughout the world. To prove to Allah — the Almighty and most deserving of praise — that we will do whatever we can to defend weak Moslems, and to wage war against the US imperialists and their allies.

Several key themes stand out: the notion of a global Islamic community, "not limited by geographic boundaries", that must be defended; the "US army of the Cross and its allies" representing the repository of the "Crusader spirit" of this age, an idea which finds deep resonance within Sayyid Qutb's writings[58] which have been circulated within the JI network; the idea that JI is seeking to wage a legitimate defensive *jihad* to "defend weak men, weak women, and innocent babies, who are always the targets of the barbarous actions of the American terrorists and their allies"; the rationale of avenging the deaths of innocent, helpless Muslim civilians at the hands of "the American terrorists and their allies" in Muslim lands such as Afghanistan; the importance of driving home the point that the blood of Muslims is not cheap;[59] the imperative to give the "the American terrorists and their allies" a taste of their own medicine, so to speak; and finally, and perhaps significantly, the notion that part of the definition of being a good Muslim is the very willingness to "prove to Allah" that one is willing to wage global *jihad* in defence of the faith anywhere. In Southeast Asia, such motivations have already produced "martyrdom" operations, or more precisely suicide attacks, against "infidel" US targets in Bali and in Jakarta.

But how did Samudra arrive at this understanding of what a good Muslim in the 21st century must be? Here Samudra, a well-educated individual who had taught himself the use of computers and who considered himself a leader within the JI network may be less typical than the average JI foot soldier. While most of the JI rank and file appear to adhere very closely to the ideological interpretation laid down by their leaders,[60] Samudra seems to conform to the model of the radical Islamist who, rather than adhering slavishly to the *fatwas* or religious edicts of a small coterie of religious scholars or *ulama*, believes that *ijtihad*, the independent interpretation of Islamic doctrine — is a right to be exercised by every knowledgeable Muslim.[61] Thus when he was asked in December 2002 whether his understanding of *jihad* had been influenced by "Jafar Umar Thalib", "Abu Bakar Bashir", "Habib Rizieq Syihab", "Hambali" or "Muklas", he responded: "I've never thought of the five people above as being leaders or idols; and I've never consulted any of

those five".[62] Samudra proceeded to inform investigators that he had made up his own mind after reading books by radicals such as Abdullah Azzam, Safar al-Hawali and Ibn Taymiyyah, amongst others. He added that articles posted on certain radical Islamist Internet sites had shaped his views as well. Samudra's admission that he had been influenced by what he himself had read and imbibed from the Internet underscores Zachary Abuza's worry in these pages that the real danger, aside from nebulous institutional "linkages", is that Al Qaeda, through the over 1,000 sites on the Internet Gunaratna mentions, is metastasising into an ideology that many Southeast Asian radical Islamists are finding irresistible. Hence while Southeast Asia is still home to very secular and moderate Muslims, the number who share Al Qaeda's world view, sense of injustice and intolerance, and conviction that a militant *jihad* are necessary to bring about their social, political and economic vision, is growing. This, according to Ramakrishna, will translate into greater "political space" within which JI can sustain itself.

While sustained effort must therefore be expended on intelligence sharing and law enforcement measures to interdict the flow of JI militants, funds and terrorist material throughout the region, thereby closing down, in Ramakrishna's phrase, the network's functional space, equal effort must be expended on closing down the network's political space that empowers and complements its functional space. Ramakrishna reckons in this respect, three key policy thrusts are necessary:

> [E]radicating local political and socioeconomic "root causes"; assisting progressive Islamists win the ideological battle for Islam in Southeast Asia; and reducing the "political oxygen" issuing from US policy and behaviour that fuel regional radical Islamist propaganda that the America is attacking the worldwide *ummah*.

Ramakrishna argues that in essence targeting JI's ideology is the key to closing down its political space within some Southeast Asian Muslim communities. It is suggested here that to counter this ideology, more effort needs to be expended in three inter-related realms: developing appropriate counter-ideologies, encouraging more active participation by progressive Muslims and fostering more public space in the ideological war, and urging more calibrated US foreign policy behaviour toward the Muslim world. In terms of developing an appropriate counter-ideological response to radical Islamism of the Al Qaeda and JI kind, it seems particularly important for progressive Muslims in the region and elsewhere to more aggressively promote what the Tunisian scholar Rachid Ghannoushi calls a "realistic fundamentalism". This

seeks to revive Islamic values in all spheres of life while grounding them in current realities, and instead of a binary "us-versus-them" dichotomised worldview, celebrate the value of religious pluralism.[63] This approach implies an ideological engagement not merely with violent radical Salafism, but also its not necessarily violent but nonetheless rejectionist ideational forebear, neo-Salafism.

In this connection, Azyumardi Azra is forthright in calling on Southeast Asian Muslim leaders to engage in ideological combat. He insists that "it is time for moderate Muslim leaders to speak more clearly and loudly that a literal interpretation of Islam will only lead to an extremism that is unacceptable to Islam, and that Islam cannot condone, let alone justify, any kind of violent and terrorist act". Significantly, Azra, whose views carry considerable weight in Indonesia, argues that President Megawati should not feel overly hampered by her lack of Islamic credentials:

> She is regarded as very hesitant and indecisive in taking any harsh measures against the radicals, because she is worried — it seems — of the possible backlash from the Muslim public. It appears that she does not realise that the moderate Muslim leaders and organisations are more than willing to rally behind her in opposition against any kind of religious extremism and radicalism. This has been made clear by the statements of Hasyim Muzadi (national chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama/NU) and Syafii Maarif (national chairman of Muhammadiyah) since the 11 September 2001 tragedy in the US that Indonesian Islam cannot accept any kind of religious extremism.

In addition, encouraging greater activism by progressive Muslims in the counter-ideological war with the radical Islamists and their neo-Salafiyyah cousins implies opening up more political space within Southeast Asia for more open discussion of topics such as various understandings of *jihad*; ways to reconcile the obligations of dual citizenship in both a national state as well as a transnational Islamic community or *ummah*; and the challenges and rewards of practising one's faith within a modern, secular, multi-religious society. In particular, more open discussion on the various interpretations of the *dar al islam* or realm of Islam might be salutary. As well-known Egyptian-born, European-based Islamic scholar Tariq Ramadan suggests, Muslims "should not consider Europe and other 'non-Muslim' countries as lands of darkness, the *dar al-harb*, and therefore unsafe for Muslims".[64] Ramadan suggests that *ulama* and professionals should form national, regional or international committees to discuss openly these and other questions.[65] In addition, the mass media can also help "promote transparency and public criticism by exposing

the attempts of radical preachers to misuse Islam for violent ends".[66] More open debate within the Muslim community in Southeast Asia will also foster greater critical thinking that might well be an antidote to JI recruitment. It is telling that the Singapore government's January 2003 White Paper on the JI threat noted that the Singapore JI detainees relied heavily upon their leaders for pointing out what "true Islam meant". They themselves had found it "stressful to be critical, evaluative and rational", and displayed "high compliance, low assertiveness" and did not really question their religious values. This rendered them very vulnerable to manipulation and indoctrination by the leaders.[67]

Finally, given the very direct connection between perceived US antipathy against the Muslim world and Islamist radicalisation in Southeast Asia, as evidenced by Imam Samudra's comments, it is very important that Washington makes a serious effort to improve its image with Muslims worldwide. On the one hand, as Ramakrishna observes in the volume, more nuanced public diplomacy showing how America has "genuinely helped alleviate the plight of Muslims in Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and now Iraq" is needed. On the other hand, Ramakrishna argues that:

> America must not undercut its own public diplomacy by inadvertently generating political oxygen that can be exploited by JI for propaganda purposes. Any air strike or military/law enforcement operation that accidentally kills, injures or brutalises Afghan or Iraqi civilians would only generate political oxygen that JI can exploit to fuel anti-Americanism.

Ramakrishna warns, moreover, that if the US does not ensure the emergence of viable states in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and is seen as one-sided in its approach to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, "this would further reinforce the JI ideological narrative" of a "Crusader" America persecuting Islam, and in Southeast Asia, produce more Amrozis and Imam Samudras.

Saving Southeast Asian Salafism with a "Smiling Face"

The upshot of the preceding discussion is that while it may be unfair to label Southeast Asia as a "terrorist haven" and thus the "second front" in the war on terror, it most clearly is a front in that war. Moreover, while it is certainly true that Al Qaeda and JI are not necessarily behind all militant Islamist groups within the region that does not mean that they are not trying to co-opt them. The operational picture is always dynamic. Southeast Asia cannot be

considered a "terrorist haven" because of the Bali and more recent Marriott bombings, simply because terror plots and terror attacks are occurring in other theatres as well. The real danger is not that the region is becoming a hotbed of terrorism, but rather that the region's tolerant, progressive brand of Islam is in danger of being gradually marginalised by a far more virulent, rejectionist ideological variant in the form of neo-Salafism and its radical offshoot. In a recent article Emmanuel Sivan suggests that Indonesian "liberal" Islam, with its contention that the faith should be a private affair and need not "regulate every aspect of life", is unique and cannot be considered a model for the rest of the Muslim world.[68] However, he ignores the fact that a nuanced Indonesian Islamic fundamentalism, or Salafism with a "smiling face", as Azyumardi Azra might well put it, has also been developing in that land for many decades. According to Azra, the distinction between Clifford Geertz's classic *santri* and *abangan*[69] categories has been blurring for a very long time, and Islamic orthodoxy in the cultural rather than the political sphere has been gradually gaining ground over an extended period, a phenomenon also visible in other Southeast Asian communities. It is this Southeast Asian "realistic fundamentalism" with its emphasis on the commingling of *tawhid* as well as religious tolerance that is worth saving, precisely because its projection beyond Southeast Asia might encourage the rise of similar, contextualised ideological variants elsewhere.[70] Given, as we have seen, the primacy of ideological factors in the war on terror, such a scenario would have profound strategic effects. If this volume can encourage the adoption of a middle-range, bottom-up counter-terror strategy that helps secure the survival and wider propagation of Southeast Asian Salafism with a "smiling face", the effort would have been worth it.

Notes

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3. Derwin Pereira, "Marriott Bomber 'Blundered' ", *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 17 August 2003.
4. Pereira, "Marriott Bomber 'Blundered' ".
5. Moore, "Jakarta Fears JI Has Suicide Brigade".
6. *Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous* (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 26 August 2003), pp. 11–12.

7. Leslie Lopez, "Asian Militants Remain a Concern", *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 August 2003.
8. Romesh Ratnesar, "How an Al-Qaeda Bigwig Got Nabbed", *Time*, 25 August 2003, p. 42.
9. "Travellers Face No-Go Zones", *Insurance Day*, 22 August 2003.
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11. Peter Kammerer, "Anti-Terror Drive in Southeast Asia is 'Half-Hearted': Experts Say Not Enough is Being Done to Stop the Spread of Muslim Extremism", *South China Morning Post*, 5 September 2003.
12. Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg, "Introduction", in Richard J. Ellings and Aaron L. Friedberg with Michael Wills, eds., *Strategic Asia 2002–03: Asian Aftershocks* (Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2002), p. 4.
13. In this work, political Islam refers to a political ideology based on Islamic principles. Islamic fundamentalists have also been termed Islamists. Radical Islamists refer to Islamists who adopt violence in pursuit of their goals.
14. See essays on post-911 security cooperation between the US and its Asian allies and partners in See Seng Tan and Amitav Acharya, eds., *Evolving Approaches to Asia Pacific Security* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, forthcoming).
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16. Wong Chun Wai and Lourdes Charles, "Hadi Was At the Meeting of Islamic Radicals", *The Star* (Malaysia), 7 February 2003.
17. Timothy Mapes, "Indonesian School Gives High Marks to Students Embracing Intolerance", *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, 2 September 2003.
18. In Chapter 15, Rizal Sukma adopts a broad definition of "radical Islam" in Indonesia, embracing non-violent if exclusionist neo-Salafiyyah ideological elements, together with more violent radical Salafiyyah strands.
19. See Kumar Ramakrishna and Andrew Tan, "The New Terrorism: Diagnoses and Prescriptions", in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna, eds., *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), p. 6.
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21. *Jemaah Islamiyah in South East Asia: Damaged But Still Dangerous*, p. 2.
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32. Sahni, "The Locus of Error", in Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific*, p. 9.
33. See Seng Tan, "Déjà vu in Australia's Reaction to Bali," *The Straits Times*, 2 November 2002.
34. Sahni, "The Locus of Error", in Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific,* p. 8.
35. US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism, 1 August 2002, available at <www.state.gov/p/eap/rls/ot/12428.htm>.
36. John Gershman, "Is Southeast Asia the Second Front?", *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2002), pp. 60–74.
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38. Sahni, "The Locus of Error", in Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific*, p. 12.
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41. Jones and Smith, "The Perils of Hyper-Vigilance", p. 46.
42. Jones and Smith, "The Perils of Hyper-Vigilance", p. 47.
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44. Jones and Smith, "The Perils of Hyper-Vigilance", p. 49. Smith and Jones refer here to the Internal Security Department of Singapore.
45. Jones and Smith, "The Perils of Hyper-Vigilance", p. 44.
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59. A similar notion appears to have also motivated the Ramzi Yousef cell that bombed the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993. Benjamin and Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, p. 13.
60. Singapore Government White Paper, *Command No. 2 of 2003: The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism* (Singapore: Ministry of Home Affairs, 7 July 2003).
61. Osama bin Laden shares the same view. Benjamin and Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror*, p. 117.
62. This attitude accords very well with Samudra's side comment, made while testifying during Bashir's trial, that he had found Bashir "boring" and "out of touch". Samudra complained further: "It's the age of the Internet but he still talks about mysticism while Muslims are being slaughtered". "Testimonies Clear Bashir: Lawyers", *The Age*, 29 May 2003.
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66. Elena Pavlova, "An Ideological Response to Islamist Terrorism: Theoretical and Operational Overview", in Rohan Gunaratna, ed., *Terrorism in the Asia-Pacific: Threat and Response*, p. 43.
67. Singapore Government White Paper *on The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*, p. 17.
68. Emmanuel Sivan, "The Clash Within Islam", *Survival*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Spring 2003), pp. 41–43.
69. *Santri* refers to devout Muslims, *abangan* to nominal Muslims. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York: The Free Press, 1968, originally New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1960).
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I. *The Religion/Ideology Factor*

Chapter 1

Bali and Southeast Asian Islam: Debunking the Myths

Azyumardi Azra

Religious life is often coloured by myths. In fact many religions have their roots in such myths, originating from the enchantment of human beings with gods and nature. Revealed religions like Islam, Christianity, and Judaism (all Abrahamic religions), however, are opposed to myths. Known as a strict monotheistic religion, Islam strongly emphasises the need to keep the faith free from any kind of myth, especially those relating to God, since it could lead to "associationism" (*shirk*), which is one of cardinal sins in Islam.

Images of Islam among both Muslims and non-Muslims are also often coloured by misperceptions, if not myths. This may be so because of historical, sociological and political factors. For the purpose of this essay, a few of these myths that specifically relate to Southeast Asian Islam in particular will be critically assessed.

The first myth, which is still strong among Western scholars and observers, is the "myth of *abangan*", to the effect that Southeast Asian Islam is not real Islam. The very term "religion of Java" coined by the American anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, to describe Islamic life among the Javanese, reflects the reluctance to recognise the Islamicity of Islam in Java, or even in Southeast Asia in general. Through his distinction of *santri* (strict and practicing Muslims) and *abangan* (nominal Muslims), Geertz argues that the majority of Muslims in Java, or even in Indonesia in general, were

in fact *abangan*. As a result, Southeast Asian Islam historically, sociologically, culturally, and politically is regarded only as a marginal and peripheral Islam vis-à-vis Middle Eastern Islam. Southeast Asian Islam is viewed as an obscure phenomenon and comprising a "thin veneer of symbols attached to a supposedly solid core of animistic and Hindu-Buddhist meaning". In short, Islam is regarded as having no significant impact on Southeast Asian culture.[1]

It is true that Southeast Asian Islam is the least Arabised owing to the process of Islamisation which was generally peaceful and gradual; but one should not be misled about the "myth" of the *abangan*. The reality is that while older local beliefs and practices resisted the continued process of Islamisation, a purer and orthodox form of Islam, nevertheless, did steadily penetrate deeper into parts of the region. A number of scholars did not fail to observe this tendency. As early as the 1950s, Harry J. Benda maintained that the Islamic history of Indonesia (as elsewhere in Southeast Asia) was essentially a history of *santri* cultural expansion and its impact on Indonesian religious life and politics.[2] Two decades later, Federspiel concluded that over the past four hundred years, Indonesia (as well as Islam in Southeast Asia in general) had slowly been moving towards a more orthodox form of religion, while its heterodox beliefs and practices had declined considerably over the same period.[3] Later research by such scholars as Woodward,[4] Pranowo,[5] Ricklefs[6] and others have further confirmed the strong tendency towards Islamic orthodoxy and the blurring of the distinction between *santri* and *abangan*. The process is also known in Indonesia as santrinisation, something that involves some indigenisation or contextualisation.

New attachments — if not Islamic rejuvenation — can be observed clearly among Muslims in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, in the last two decades at least. New tendencies in religious observance, new institutions, new Muslim groups, and new Islamic lifestyles have increasingly emerged during this period. More new mosques with new architecture have been constructed, and they attract full congregations, mostly youth. At the same time, more Muslims have gone for the pilgrimage to Mecca; in fact the number of pilgrims (some 225,000 Muslims) from Southeast Asia is the largest compared to those coming from other areas of the Muslim world. At the same time, more religious alms and donations (*zakat*, *infaq* and *sadaqah*, or ZIS) have been collected from well-to-do Muslims and distributed among poorer and deprived co-religionists. New institutions for collecting ZIS have been formed, like the *Dompet Dhua'fa Republika* in Indonesia, which has been phenomenally successful.

The more conciliatory policies of the regimes in Indonesia and Malaysia toward Islam and Muslim groups since the 1990s, have greatly contributed to the rise of new Islamic institutions such as Islamic banks (also known in Indonesia as *shariah* banks, since they operate in accordance with the shariah/Islamic law), Islamic insurance (*takaful*), Islamic people's credit unions (BPR-Shariah, or Bank Perkreditan Rakyat Shariah, and BMT or Bait al-Mal wa al-Tamwil). Malaysia of course developed these Islamic institutions much earlier than Indonesia. But even in Indonesia, "conventional banks" — following the Malaysian example — have also opened *shariah* divisions or branches.

In addition, new, good quality Islamic educational institutions have been established in Malaysia and Indonesia either by Muslim private foundations or by the state. In Malaysia, this includes the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) by the Malaysian government, followed by a number of other Islamic universities and colleges; the latest one being the College University Islam Malaysia (CUIM). In Indonesia Islamic higher education now consists of 33 State Islamic Colleges (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam, or STAIN), established in 1997 in various cities throughout Indonesia. Besides these, there are also 13 State Institutes for Islamic Studies (Institut Agama Islam Negeri, or IAIN) established in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 2002, one of the IAINs, IAIN Jakarta, was converted into a full-fledged university (Universitas Islam Negeri, or UIN). It not only comprises faculties of Islamic studies (religious sciences), but of also Economics, Science and Technology, and Psychology.

These Islamic higher educational institutions undoubtedly play an important role in the modernisation of Muslim society. Owing much to their "rational" and "non-denominational" approaches to Islam, graduates of IAINs, STAINs, and UIN have been recognised by Indonesian society in general as having a progressive, inclusive, and tolerant view of Islam. In contrast, many students and graduates of "secular" universities such as the University of Indonesia (UI) or the Bandung Institute of Technology (Institut Teknologi Bandung, or ITB) tend to be more literal in their view and understanding of Islam. STAIN, IAIN and UIN graduates are very instrumental in the building and spread of Islamic institutions such as the Islamic schools, *pesantren*s (traditional Islamic boarding educational institutions), *madrasah*s (Islamic religious schools), NGOs, and the *Majlis Ta'lim*, or the religious group discussions in offices and society at large.[7]

In the meantime, new, reputable schools and *madrasah*s, such as the Sekolah Islam al-Azhar, SMU Madania, SMU al-Izhar, and the like have also been established in ever increasing numbers since the late 1980s. These Islamic

schools are known as "*sekolah Islam unggulan*" (quality Islamic schools) that are attended mostly by children of the Muslim elite. These schools play an important role in the "re-Islamisation" or "santrinisation" of Muslim parents.

At the same time, the *madrasah*s, in line with the Indonesian Educational Law of 1989, are equivalent to "secular schools" and *pesantren*s/*pondok*s have been modernised as well. They now employ the national curricula issued by the Ministries of National Education and of Religious Affairs. It is inaccurate to assume that the *madrasah*s and *pesantren*s have their own curricula that would allow them to teach subjects according to the whims of their teachers or the foundations that own them. Therefore, it is wrong to regard them as the "breeding ground" of Talibanism or extremism as is the case of many *madrasah*s in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

The *pesantren*s are now also established in the urban areas; in the past, the *pesantren*s were associated mostly with rural areas and symbolised Muslim backwardness. Furthermore, in the past the *pesantrens* were generally found in Java, but now more *pesantren*s have emerged in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and other islands. The *pesantren*s play a number of roles. They are not only centres of Islamic education, but also centres of social development and empowerment. As a centre of Islamic education, *pesantren*s now offer a variety of educational opportunities. They may take the form of general schools, *madrasah*s, or even provide vocational training up to university. And, as a centre of social development, *pesantren*s conduct programmes and activities related to economic development, social welfare, appropriate technologies for rural areas, etc.

All of these new developments symbolise some of much wider changes amongst Southeast Asian Muslims. Since the 1980s it has been possible to observe the rise of a new Muslim middle class. While there is no specific term used to denote this social category in Indonesia, in Malaysia any member of this rising Muslim middle class is called the "new Malay".[8] Even though this new Muslim middle class is heavily dependent upon the regimes, there is little doubt that it has played a significant role in the construction and support of the new Islamic institutions. Furthermore, the new Muslim middle class has been very instrumental in the spread of new lifestyles such as the widespread use of *jilbab* for women, or of "*baju koko*" or Muslim shirts. It has even engendered a new tradition of conducting religious discussions, seminars, and ceremonies in hotels and other prominent places.

Despite all these new "attachments" to Islam, it is important to point out that by and large these have not led to significant changes in political attitudes. The majority of Muslims in Southeast Asia continue to hold fast to the political

arrangements that were achieved in the successive periods of independence following World War II. It is true that after the fall of Suharto, many Islamic parties were established in Indonesia; but they failed to win significant votes in the 1999 general elections.[9] In Malaysia, while PAS was able to gain ground in the last elections, it is clear that the UMNO remains too strong to oust. It seems that it is almost a myth that the Islamists would be able to wrest political power in both Indonesia and Malaysia. Therefore, it is a myth to exaggerate the strength and influence of the Islamists in the region.

One has to admit that one of the most obvious features of Islamic politics in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia and Malaysia, is conflict and fragmentation amongst the political elite. Especially in Indonesia in the post-Suharto period, a great number of Islamic political parties have appeared. These parties are involved in bitter struggles not only to gain political power but to also dominate the meaning and interpretation of Islam.

Global Influences

It is clear that in addition to the internal dynamics in Malaysia and Indonesia that contribute to the increasing openness to Islamic influences, global forces have also played an important role. The tendency toward orthodoxy in Southeast Asia had its origins in the intense religio-intellectual contacts and connections since at least the 16th century between Malay-Indonesian students and their co-religionists and *ulama* in the Middle East, particularly in the *Haramayn* (Mecca and Medina). Returning students or scholars implanted a more *shariah*-oriented Islam in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago, which forced the so-called "pantheistic" (or "*wujudiyyah mulhid*") Sufism to cede ground.[10] This was the beginning of the rise of a more scriptural Islam, or in Reid's term, "scriptural orthodoxy" in Southeast Asia.[11]

The intense contacts between Southeast Asian Islam and the Middle East continued throughout the 19th century. By the end of the 19th century, new waves of Muslim discourse reached the shores of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. Not only returning students, but also *haj* pilgrims, who from the 1870s travelled in ever increasing numbers to the Holy Land, were responsible. The most important discourse in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago arising from this wave was pan-Islamism. Other waves came in the early 20th century. In particular, a new kind of wave originated from Cairo, which has been categorised as "Islamic modernism". The spread of this new discourse led to the formation of such modernist Muslim organisations as the Muhammadiyah (1912), al-Irsyad (1913), and Persis (in the early 1920s).[12]

In recent times, the globalising waves that influence Muslim discourse in Southeast Asia no longer stem only from the *Haramayn* or even from Cairo. In fact, the privileged status of the *Haramayn* (or Saudi Arabia as a whole), so far as the discourse of Southeast Asian Islam is concerned, has been eroded in the last few decades. In fact, Wahhabism, which originated in late 18th century Arabia and is the official religious ideology of the modern state of Saudi Arabia, remains an anathema for many Muslims in Southeast Asia. The tradition of Islam in Southeast Asia is simply incompatible with Wahhabi literalism and radicalism. Therefore one should not overplay the influence of Saudi Arabian Wahhabism in Southeast Asia. Even though there are some traces of Wahhabism in the region, they are surely too insignificant to influence the course of Southeast Asian Islam.[13]

Instead, other places in the Middle East, or elsewhere in the Muslim world, have come to the fore and left their imprints on Muslim discourse in Southeast Asia. Thus, since the 1980s the discourse developed by such scholars as Abu al-A'la al-Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb, Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani and Middle Eastern movements like al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (and its splinter groups), Hizbut Tahrir and the like have spread in Southeast Asia. The Iranian Ayatullah Khomeini's Islamic revolution in 1979 has also inspired the Islamists in the region to assert their existence.

At the same time, however, Muslim thinkers living in the Western hemisphere such as Ismail al-Faruqi, Fazlur Rahman, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and others have provided yet another stream of Islamic thought circulating in Southeast Asia. Through their books that have been translated in the Indonesian and Malay languages, they also exert their influence among Southeast Asian Muslims.

It is important to point out that despite all the thought streams coming from outside the region, Southeast Asian Muslim thinkers have developed their own distinctive thought. There is no simple adoption of thought from abroad. In fact, there remain continued attempts among Southeast Asian Muslim thinkers and *ulama* to formulate thinking that has greater relevance with the Southeast Asian historical, sociological, cultural and political contexts. This is apparent in the concepts introduced by Southeast Asian Muslim scholars, such as "indigenisation", or "contextualisation" of Islam in Southeast Asia.

Looking again at the religious, sociological and political realities of Southeast Asian Muslims, it could be argued that there is only a very limited room for radical discourses and movements to play in Southeast Asia in general. Therefore, it is a myth to assert that Muslim radicalism in the Middle East finds a fertile ground in Southeast Asia.

Of course, for some foreign observers as well the international media, the face of Southeast Asian Islam is undergoing significant change. Increasingly, Islam in the region is regarded as being rapidly radicalised; and worse still, the Muslim regions of Southeast Asia are now collectively perceived as a potential "hotbed of terrorism". This perception, it could be argued, is a kind of myth also. There is of course the potential for radicalism among Southeast Asian Muslims, but it is too far-fetched to argue that the region is becoming a "hotbed of terrorism".

It is probably almost a cliché that Southeast Asian Islam is a distinctive Islam, having a different expression compared with Islam in the Middle East or elsewhere in the Islamic world. In fact, since the 1990s Southeast Asian Islam has been dubbed by leading international media such as *Newsweek* and *Time* magazines as "Islam with a smiling face". Islam in the region has been generally regarded as peaceful and moderate, having no problem with modernity, democracy, human rights and other tendencies of the modern world.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning that according to a report entitled "Freedom in the World 2002: The Democracy Gap" released by Freedom House in late December 2001, Indonesia is mentioned as one of the "bright spots" of democracy among dominant or pre-dominant Muslim countries. Whereas there is an apparent "democracy gap" in the Islamic Arab countries, Indonesia and — I would argue — also Malaysia have shown considerable democratic fervent. Thus, the "bright spots" of democracy in Indonesia and Malaysia indicate that by its very nature, Southeast Asian Islam indeed has no problem co-existing with democracy and modernity.[14]

However, in post-Suharto Indonesia, discussion and debate on the relationship between Islam and democracy has once again come to the forefront both at the levels of discourse and realities of Indonesian politics. The fact that there have been a number of conflicting political trends since Indonesia entered the democratic realm during the interregnum of President B. J. Habibie until today has also created further confusion about the relationship between Islam and democracy.

Furthermore, rapid political changes that have been taking place at the national, regional and international levels, especially after the 11 September 2001 tragedy in the US, have indeed witnessed the rise of Muslim radicalism in the region. The arrests of a number of individuals and groups in Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, and Indonesia has increasingly indicated that they have regional links with each other and perhaps with international terrorist groups as well.

The investigation by the Indonesian police of the Bali bombings on 12 October 2002, for instance, has appeared to indicate the complex connections between individuals and groups that carry out violent and terrorist activities. There are at least two conspicuous patterns that have been uncovered. Firstly, some of the perpetrators of the bombings are alumni of the Ngruki Pesantren, the chief of which is Abu Bakar Bashir, who is widely regarded as the spiritual leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, the core of radical groups in Southeast Asia. Secondly, some of the perpetrators had been living in Malaysia in the period of Abu Bakar Bashir's self-exile, escaping President Suharto's harsh measures.[15]

Thus, the perception of the rise of radicalism among Southeast Asian Muslims appeared rapidly after the 11 September 2001 tragedy in New York and Washington DC. This perception grew stronger with the successive events in the aftermath of September 11, especially the Bali bombings that left almost two hundred innocent people dead. The bombings at the McDonald outlet and Haji Kalla car show room in Makasar, South Sulawesi, on the eve of *'Id al-Fitr* (5 December 2002), has furthermore confirmed the terrorist tendencies among certain radical individuals and groups in Indonesia.

There is little doubt that events following the 11 September 2001 tragedy have rapidly radicalised certain individuals and groups among Muslims in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia. The American military operation in Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks unfortunately generated momentum for the radicals to assert themselves more strongly. Furthermore, the arrests of a number of suspected radicals in Malaysia, Singapore, and Philippines added fuel to their anger and bitterness toward the US and symbols that they consider as representing American "imperialist arrogance", such as McDonalds or Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets. The Bush Administration's attack on Iraq has further fuelled bitter resentment among the radicals.

In addition to that, political realities in Indonesia have also contributed to radicalisation of certain individuals and groups. The breakdown of law and order and the weakness of central government authority after the fall of President Suharto have provided some room for the radicals to assert themselves. In fact they have attempted to destabilise the Megawati Sukarnoputri presidency, which they have opposed since Megawati's PDI-P won the 1999 general elections, making her the most feasible presidential candidate even though Abdurrahman Wahid subsequently edged her out.[16]

Nevertheless, one should not be misled by these current developments. In fact, radicalism among Indonesian Muslims in particular is not new. Even though Southeast Asian Islam in general has been viewed as moderate and peaceful, the history of Islam in the region shows that radicalism among

Muslims has existed for at least two centuries. The Wahhabi-like Padri movement, in West Sumatra in late 18th and early 19th centuries, tried to force other Muslims in the area to subscribe to their literal understanding of Islam. This violent movement aimed at spreading the pure and pristine Islam as practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (the *salaf*). The Padri, however, failed to gain support from majority of Muslims. The Padri movement remains the only precedent for Wahhabi-like radicalism throughout Southeast Asia.

The Padri movement represented a shift in the continued influence of Middle Eastern Islam on the course of its Southeast Asian counterpart. As argued elsewhere,[17] from the 16th to 18th centuries, Islam in the Middle East exerted a very strong influence on Islamic intellectualism and religious life in Southeast Asia, mainly through complex networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian *ulama*. As mentioned above, the Malay-Indonesian *ulama*, in turn, played a crucial role in the peaceful reforms of Islamic intellectualism and life in Southeast Asia. It should be mentioned, however, that toward the end of the 18th century, the discourse on *jihad* (war) was introduced by such prominent Malay-Indonesian scholars as ʻAbd al-Samad al-Palimbani and Daud ibn ʻAbd Allah al-Patani as a response to the increased encroachment of European colonialism in Southeast Asia. The *jihad* was not directed against other Muslims. Therefore, it is the Padri of West Sumatra who set the precedent for radicalism among Southeast Asian Muslims by launching the *jihad* against their fellow Muslims.

Politico-Religious Roots of Radicalism and Terrorism

The root causes of radicalism among Muslims are very complex. The complexity is even greater during the present time, because of many driving factors that are working to influence the course of Muslim societies as a whole. In the pre-modern period, the factors of radicalism were mainly internal. That is, they were a response to internal problems that were faced by the Muslims such as the rapid decline of Muslim political entities and continued conflicts among Muslims. Many Muslims in pre-colonial times strongly believed that the sorry situation of the Muslim world had a lot to do with the socio-moral decay of Muslims themselves resulting from their wrong religious belief and practices; according to this argument, they simply had abandoned the original and real teachings of Islam.

As a result, some Muslims felt it necessary to conduct *tajdid* (renewal) or *islah* (reform) not only through peaceful means, but also by force and other

radical means they considered to be more effective, by declaring *jihad* (war) against Muslims who were regarded as having gone astray. Islam of course emphasises the need for Muslims to renew their beliefs and practices. In fact, in one of his *hadith* (traditions), the Prophet Muhammad states that there would be a reformer or renewer (*mujaddid*) who would come at the end of every century to renew and revitalise Islam. But at the same time, the *hadith* clearly prohibits the use of radical and violent means in the efforts to renew and reform Islam.

One of the strongest tendencies in the discourses and movements in Islamic renewal and reform is the orientation towards pure and pristine Islam as practised by the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (the *salaf*s). That is why most of the Islamic renewal movements are called "Salafiyyah" (or Salafi, or Salafism). There is a very wide spectrum of Islamic discourse and movements that can be included in Salafiyyah. One can make a distinction between "classic Salafiyyah" and "neo-Salafiyyah"; or between "peaceful Salafiyyah" and "radical Salafiyyah". The Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula that gained momentum in the late 18th century can be categorised as both classic and radical Salafiyyah. The same can be said of the Padri movement in West Sumatra as described briefly above. The Wahhabi-like Padri movement can be conveniently categorised as "classic Salafism", in which the internal factors within the Muslim *ummah* were its driving force.

The spectrum of "neo-Salafiyyah" discourses and movements is certainly very complex. The term "neo" in the first instance refers to the period of the modern period, beginning with the harsh encounters between Muslim societies and Western colonial powers from the 16th century onwards. During this period, external factors — associated mostly with the Western world — that incited radicalism amongst Muslims became increasingly dominant. In fact, the West was accused by many Muslims as responsible for many problems that Muslims faced over the past several centuries. Confronting continued Western political, economic and cultural domination and hegemony, many Muslims were afflicted by a kind of defensive psychology that led to, among others, the belief of the so-called "conspiracy theory".

There were of course outbursts of Muslim radicalism in Southeast Asia in the 19th century and before World War II during the heyday of European colonialism in the region. This was a different kind of radicalism. It in fact comprised *jihad*s to liberate Muslim lands (*dar al-Islam*) from the occupation of the hostile infidel Europeans coming from the lands of war (*dar al-harb*). According to classical Islamic doctrines, *jihad* against hostile infidels is justified

and, in fact, is considered as a just war; the *jihad*s of this kind are believed as wars in the way of God (*jihad fi sabil Allah*).

Looking at the whole history of radicalism among Muslims, I would argue that the phenomenon is more political rather than religious. In some instances, the original motive could have been religious, but quickly became very political. Political developments in Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia after World War II, had been important factors of the rise of new kind of radicalism among Muslims. For instance, disappointed with the Indonesian military policy of rationalisation of paramilitary groups following Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945, Kartosuwirjo, in the name of Islam, rebelled against the government. This was the origin of the Dar al-Islam (DI, or Islamic State) or Negara Islam Indonesia (NII, Islamic State of Indonesia) and Indonesian Islamic Army (Tentera Islam Indonesia/TII) that aimed at establishing an Islamic state, *dawlah al-Islamiyah*, in Indonesia. Even though the rebellious movement spread to South Sulawesi and Aceh in the 1950s, it failed to gain support from the majority of Indonesian Muslims, who after a bitter struggle in the last year of Japanese occupation, had accepted Pancasila ("five pillars") as the national ideology. As a result, the Indonesian army was able to crush the radical Islamic movement.

The idea of the establishment of an Islamic state (*dawlah al-Islamiyyah*) is one of the most crucial issues that have periodically occupied certain groups of Muslims in Indonesia. Certain groups among the moderates, such as the Masjumi party under the leadership of Mohammad Natsir, for instance, also attempted to transform Indonesia into a *dawlah al-Islamiyyah*. It is important to point out that these attempts were carried out through legal and constitutional ways, more precisely, through parliament. But the moderates failed to materialise the idea, mainly because Islamic parties were involved in quarrels and conflicts among themselves and therefore failed to gain a majority in the national election of 1955, and thus, by implication, the parliament.

It is important to note that despite that failure, the moderate Muslim leaders have not resorted to illegal means, such as armed rebellion, to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state. In contrast, there has been a growing tendency among them to accept Pancasila as the final political reality, as the common platform for a plural Indonesia. At the same time, however, there remain individuals and Muslim groups who keep the idea of establishing an Islamic state in Indonesia alive. Depending on the political situation at certain times, these people can operate underground or openly in achieving their goals. They may also collaborate with certain unhappy military elements or even with other radical groups, which, in terms of ideology, are incompatible

with theirs. This awkward collaboration can be called a "marriage for convenience", or in Islamic terms: "*nikah mut'ah*". Therefore, one should be very careful in analysing radical groups. Some of them could genuinely be motivated by religious factors, but others could be "engineered" radicals sponsored by certain individuals and groups for their own political ends.

The Suharto New Order regime, at least in the 1970s and 1980s, was not on good terms with Muslim political forces in general. In fact there was a lot of mutual suspicion and hostilities between the two sides. President Suharto took very harsh measures against any expression of Islamic extremism. But at the same time, it is widely believed that certain military generals such as Ali Murtopo and Benny Moerdani recruited ex DI/TII to form "Komando Jihad" (Jihad Command), for the purpose of conducting subversive activities in order to discredit Islam and Muslims.[18]

Contemporary Muslim Radical Groups

The fall of Suharto after a rule that lasted more than three decades, has unleashed the idle Muslim radicals. The euphoria of newfound democracy and the lifting of the "anti-subversion law" by President B. J. Habibie, have provided very good opportunities for the radicals to express their extremist discourses and activities in a more visible manner. The lack of effective law enforcement because of demoralisation of the police and military (TNI) has created some kind of legal vacuum that in turn has been used by the radical groups to take the law into their own hands.

Some of the most important radical groups should be mentioned in this account. They are the Laskar Jihad (LJ), formed by the Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wa al-Jemaah (FKAWJ) under the leadership of Jafar Umar Thalib; the Front Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Front, or FPI) led by Habib Rizieq Syihab; the Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Mujahidin Council, or MMI) led by Abu Bakar Bashir; the Jemaah Ikhwan al-Muslimin Indonesia (JAMI) led by Habib Husein Al-Habsyi; and the Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Party of Liberation, or HTI).[19]

It is clear that all of these radical groups are independent and have no connection with established organisations like the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, etc.; nor are they affiliated with Islamic political parties. This indicates that all the radical groups do not trust other established Muslim organisations, both socio-religious and political in nature. This is mainly because in the view of these radical groups, established Muslim organisations are too accommodating and compromising in their political and religious

attitudes given Indonesian realities. In the aftermath of Suharto's fall, political struggles and conflicts among fragmented political groups, as well as between pro- and anti-status quo forces that also involve circles within the TNI, have provided another impetus for the radicals to assert themselves.

It can be suggested that there are at least two categories of these radical groups; the first comprises radical groups that are basically home grown. This includes the LJ, FPI and some other smaller groups. The second category comprises Indonesian groups modelled on Middle Eastern ones, like the JAMI — which has its origins in the al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin in Egypt — and Hizbut Tahrir, which was initially founded in Jordan by Syaikh Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani in the 1950s. Despite this distinction, all these radical groups have a very strong Middle Eastern-influenced ideology that they believe is the most genuine world-view. Therefore, in terms of religious outlook, they subscribe to the ideology of radical Salafism; and in terms of political views, they are believers in the ideology of *khilafat*ism which among their important aims is the establishment of a single, universal *khilafah* (caliphate) for all Muslims in the world.

Even though these radical groups aim to establish a *dawlah Islamiyah* of *khilafah* in the region, they are largely different from the old DI/NII movement in Indonesia. Due to conflicts and splits among the ex-DI/NII members resulting from Indonesian intelligence operations as mentioned above, the present radical groups tend to operate independently from older groups.[20]

It is important to point out that the *khilafah* and *dawlah Islamiyyah* are conspicuously absent in the discourse of mainstream Muslim organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah and other big organisations throughout the country. In fact, leaders of these organisations believe that such concepts as *dawlah Islamiyyah* are simply new inventions among certain Muslim thinkers and groups resulting from the Muslim encounter with the modern Western concept and practice of the nation-state. They conclude that the Indonesian model of a Pancasila state is already in conformity with Islam.

Looking at the whole phenomenon of radicalism among Muslims in Southeast Asia, or in Indonesia in particular, it is clear that it has a long and complex history. The history of radicalism among certain Muslim groups, furthermore, shows that there are many factors that are responsible for their extremist tendencies. It is strongly apparent that the motives driving their radicalism are political rather than religious. It is also conspicuous that their radicalism has a lot to do with the disruption of political and social systems as a whole. The absence or lack of law enforcement is certainly an important factor prompting the radicals to take laws into their own hands in the name of Islam.

"Blessing in Disguise?"

The terrorist bombing of Legian, Bali, on 12 October 2002 was certainly a sad human tragedy in contemporary Indonesia. In fact, the bombing reflected a new phase of violence and terror in the country. This could be seen not only in the relatively large number of the victims, but also in the use of lethal explosives by the terrorists to afflict the greatest psychological impact both domestically and internationally. Worse still, there was suspicion that one of the perpetrators was a suicide bomber, reminding one of the Palestinian suicide bombers. It was difficult for Indonesian people in general to accept that certain individuals among them were increasingly becoming so ruthless and inhumane.

But now, after intensive police investigations, the Bali bombing, for several reasons, could well have been a "blessing a disguise". First, police were able to not only apprehend the alleged perpetrators of the bombing, but to also unearth fresh evidence of the networks of the radicals in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. This revelation was crucial in establishing the fact that in the past several years, the radicals had been working in Southeast Asia, or in Indonesia in particular, to achieve their ends, the most important of which was supposedly an "Islamic State of Nusantara" that would consist of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and, probably also the Muslim area of South Philippines.

The Indonesian police deserved a great deal of credit for working tirelessly to investigate the case with much success. After the unsolved series of bombings since the fall of President Suharto in 1998, the police, with the help of their counterparts from Australia, for instance, were subsequently able to uncover the links of the Bali blast with a number of bombings in the last two years at least.

Second, the revelation of the networks of the radicals by the police in a apparently convincing way silenced most of the sceptics, who from the very day of the Bali blast had maintained that the bombing was simply a US or Western plot to discredit Islam and destroy the image of Muslims in the country. The "sceptics", some of them prominent Muslim leaders who seemed to believe in the so-called "conspiracy theory", had in fact accused President Megawati of slavishly surrendering to the pressures and wishes of President Bush of the US in particular.

The disclosure of the networks of the radicals apparently showed that the "conspiracy theory" did not ring true. The statements of Amrozi, Imam Samudra and their accomplices, allegedly involved in the Bali and other bombings, made it clear that the bombings had been motivated by both "genuine"

radicalism and hatred against the US and other Western powers. The fact that the perpetrators showed no remorse for killing the innocent victims further strengthened the perception that they were strongly motivated by their own violent ideology rather than anything else.

Third, the revelation of the networks pointed to the fact that there were indeed terrorists among Indonesians, who happened to be Muslims, who were more than happy to use violent means to achieve their ends. Before the police disclosure, there was widespread reluctance among leaders of Indonesian Islam to admit that there were terrorists among Indonesian Muslims who had misused the teachings of Islam to justify their terrorist activities. In fact some prominent Muslim leaders had issued statements that could have created a wrong impression amongst the public that they were not only defending the radicals, but were also condoning violence and terrorist acts.

Conclusion

It is now the right time for Southeast Asian Muslim leaders, the majority of whom are moderate, to sincerely admit that there is a serious problem of radicalism among certain Muslim individuals and groups. This problem should be fairly addressed by moderate Muslim leaders hand in hand with law enforcement agencies for the sake of the image of Islam as a peaceful religion and of Southeast Asian Muslims as the "Islamic people with a smiling face". The problems of the radicals are to be seen at two levels; first, the abuse and manipulation of certain Islamic doctrines to justify radicalism and terrorism. The abuse undoubtedly comes from a literal interpretation of Islam. The second problem is the use of violence and terrorism, which undoubtedly runs contrary to Islam.

Therefore, it is time for moderate Muslim leaders to speak more clearly and loudly that a literal interpretation of Islam will only lead to an extremism that is unacceptable to Islam, and that Islam cannot condone, let alone justify, any kind of violent and terrorist act. There is absolutely no valid reason for any Muslim to conduct activities that harm or kill other people, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Any kind of resentment and deprivation felt by any individual and group of Muslims cannot and must not justify any kind of desperate and inhuman act.

Furthermore, the moderate Muslim leaders should not be misled by the claims and assertions of the radicals. The radicals are shrewd not only in abusing Islamic doctrines for their own ends, but in also manipulating Muslim sentiment through the abuse and manipulation of mass

media, particularly television. The claims that the arrest of certain radical leaders means the suppression of Islam and the *ulama* are very misleading. Similarly, the claims that Indonesian police investigations of certain *pesantren*s in connection with the bombings represents hostility and suspicion against the whole community of *pesantren*s, are even more misleading.

The identification of radical leaders and groups with Islam and *ulama* is again very misleading. In fact the radicals represent only a small drop in the ocean of moderate Muslims who from their sheer number can be fairly regarded as the true representation of the peaceful nature of Southeast Asian Islam. Therefore, the moderates should be very careful not to support any impression that could lead to the identification of the radicals with Islam and Muslims at large.

Some have argued that the defensive attitude of certain moderate Muslim leaders, particularly in Indonesia, originates from the trauma of political engineering and abuses by the police and military of the Muslims during the Suharto period. This argument does not seem to be relevant to the current political situation. There is no evidence that the Megawati Sukarnoputri regime is hostile to Islam and Muslims. In fact President Megawati seems to be very sensitive to Muslim issues compared for instance to her predecessor President Abdurrahman Wahid, who comes from the *pesantren* milieu. Lacking Islamic credentials, President Megawati in fact prevents herself from making statements, let alone policies, that could spark opposition from Muslims in general.

There is of course a lot of criticism that could be made of President Megawati Sukarnoputri. She is regarded as very hesitant and indecisive in taking any harsh measures against the radicals, because she is worried — it seems — of the possible backlash from the Muslim public. It appears that she does not realise that the moderate Muslim leaders and organisations are more than willing to rally behind her in opposition against any kind of religious extremism and radicalism. This has been made clear by the statements of Hasyim Muzadi (national chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama/NU) and Syafii Maarif (national chairman of Muhammadiyah) since the September 11 tragedy in the US that Indonesian Islam cannot accept any kind of religious extremism. Furthermore, the two largest Muslim organisations, representing some 70 million Indonesian Muslims, have reached an accord to tackle religious radicalism through their various policies and programmes.

As for the police force, it has now become increasingly very difficult for them to practise human rights abuses as in the past. The fall of the authoritarian regime and the rise of democracy in Indonesia have forced the police to be more sensitive to human rights issues and to the protection of the rights of the alleged perpetrators of any kind of violence and terrorism. But this does not suggest that the police are free from heavy-handedness and insensitivity. Therefore, it is the duty of the public to control and watch the police closely in their investigations in order not only to prevent possible wrongdoing and mishandling of suspected criminals, but to also establish credible legal procedures and due process of law.

Therefore, moderate Muslim leaders, while maintaining a watchful eye on police efforts to bring to justice all perpetrators of violent and terrorist acts, should support the police in their investigation. It can be suggested that one of the most important root causes of violence and terrorism in present day Indonesia is the near absence of law enforcement and, worse still, impunity. In fact the vacuum of law enforcement and of decisive action by the police have been an important *raison d'être* for certain radical groups to take law into their own hands through unlawful activities such as raids on discotheques, nightclubs, and other places the radicals believe as the places of social ills.

Above all, the future of moderate and peaceful Southeast Asian Islam is much dependent on the fair, objective, pro-active attitude of the moderate majority to respond to any development among Muslims in the region. A reactionary and defensive attitude is not going to help in the efforts to show to the world that Islam is a peaceful religion and that Muslims are a peace loving people. Again, it is time for the moderates to be more assertive in leading the way to re-establishing the peaceful nature of Southeast Asian Islam.

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Chapter 2

Deconstructing *Jihad*: Southeast Asian Contexts

Patricia A. Martinez

"It is our duty to incite the *jihad* against America, Israel and their allies . . . those Muslims who say these are not times for *jihad* are gravely wrong,"[1] said Osama bin Laden as early as 1998. "Our aim was to wage *jihad*,"[2] stated Ali Imron Nurhasyim, a key suspect in the Bali bombings. Self-confessed Bali bomber Imam Samudra described for judges and prosecutors how he was obliged to wage *jihad* against infidels who oppress Muslims, stating "as a Muslim, I have a conviction that I have to defend oppressed Muslims, as stipulated by the Quran".[3] *jihad* is core and imperative in the "mission" of these key Muslim militants, couched in righteous terms as defense of Islam and Muslims.

But *jihad* has been around for a while in Southeast Asia. In the early 1880s for example, the Dutch and British consuls in Jeddah were convinced of an impending plot hatched in Mecca and Istanbul to activate the mystical orders and to declare global *jihad*.[4] Over the years, the media have reported various calls for *jihad*. Although the Americans have since changed their mind, *jihad* became prolific and sanitised in media discourse in the 1980s when the US referred to the struggle against the Russians in Afghanistan as a righteous *jihad*. However, Saddam Hussein also labeled the Gulf War a righteous *jihad* against the West in the name of Islam, and so the term has been invoked for legitimacy by both ends of the spectrum.

The salience of *jihad* after the attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 (hereafter referred to as 9/11) has not abated. The war on terror continues in various mutations around the globe including adaptations by some governments for reasons beyond stemming the tide of Muslim militancy, to contain domestic political opposition. The war in Iraq is not quite over as post-conflict resistance gathers momentum under calls for *jihad* to rid the nation of its occupation forces: Iraq's Shiite authority, Mohammad Mahdi al-Khalisi, called on Iraqis to act in concert and declare a *jihad* against the American occupation forces.[5] Sheik Mohammad Ali Abbas declared to Sunni Muslim Iraqis that for Iraq, "the future is *jihad*" [6] against the American military. Elsewhere, Muslim radicals, militants and even those who belong to neither category continue to invoke *jihad* for a variety of reasons but with increasing symmetry against a new world order configured by the unilateral might of the US. At their trials, the Bali bombers have unapologetically invoked *jihad*, describing the horror they wreaked as justified and even divinely sanctioned. Over different sources and contexts, *jihad* is identified as both ideology and catalyst indicating its many applications.

However, it is imperative to recognise that over the last century, *jihad* is the term that has been used the most in misrepresentations and misunderstandings of Muslims and their cultures so as to depict Islam as a religion of violence. Muslims themselves debate the term fiercely. On many websites and electronic discussion lists on Islam, one finds a whole range of positions including the anguish of being demonised as a Muslim who is defined by the war "*jihad*" in a post-9/11 world.

There are also exhortations to acknowledge honestly that the term has a specific history which is problematic when invoked manipulatively for the present, as some Muslims struggle to address resources for violence in Islamic text and history. It is a struggle shared by other religious traditions at various junctures of their histories. In an article entitled "Apology and Justification Cannot Serve as a Basis for the Interpretation of Islamic History", Dr. Akram Diya Al-Umari argued against the apologetic approach used by some Muslims when they discuss the issue of *jihad* in Islam or Islamic conquests. He cites Muslim historians who reject well-known and well-documented incidents such as Ibn Ishaq's reports about the slaughter of the warriors of the Quraysh, insisting that "the Islamic interpretation of history is not apologetic nor is it defensive justification".[7] However, most approaches — whether polemical, apologetic or revivalist — have distorted their representations by singling out only one trend or view amongst a broad range of thinking about war in Islamic civilisation, using it to generalise about Islam as a whole. Even some academic

work commendable for its re-examination of Islamic texts and traditions to challenge militant positions on war tend to avoid important but difficult traditional sources in an attempt to teach a unidimensional Islam promoting peace and reconciliation. The point remains that the term *jihad* has legitimated violence enacted in the name of Islam, perhaps now more than ever before. Therefore it would be useful to examine its evolution and application in all its dimensions.

Jihad: Sources in Text, Tradition and Early Muslim History

The semantic meaning of the Arabic word *jihad* derives from the root "j" "h" "d". *jihad* is a verbal noun of the third form of the root *jahada* which means to strive, to exert or to struggle. The object of exerting one's utmost effort is often categorised as against a visible enemy, the devil, and/or aspects of one's own self. For example, verse xxix: 6 of the Quran says, "And if any strive (with might and main) — *jahada* — they do so for their own souls: For God is free of all needs from all creation." *jihad* is never used to mean warfare in the Quran, but its connotation with *qital* (which means "fighting") in early Muslim history and in the Quran — where it appears in 167 verses — was to legitimate warfare.

The early invocation of *jihad* was to legitimate the expansion of the Muslim empire in the first century of Islam although it is significant that after the end of the Umayyad caliphate in 132/750, *jihad* evolved mainly into a struggle that was spiritual and abstract or for peaceful mission. The *jihad* that is invoked to justify the causes of a small group of Muslims, who are committed to achieving their objectives through violence, is a selective and manipulative appropriation from text, tradition and history.

The early Muslim state or caliphate first centred in Medina and then in Syria, constituted one of the largest unitary empires that mankind has ever known. Within a single century, the Muslim state grew rapidly, uniting a territory stretching from Spain to China. Like all other multinational empires, the Muslim state reached its greatest extent through a series of military campaigns. Expansion became an ideological imperative justified on moral grounds. In the case of the Muslim caliphate, this imperative was the establishment of God's rule on earth, for that was the sole legitimacy of sovereignty. God's rule was to be established by those kinds of efforts that God had ordained, which included armed struggle. As Khalid Yahya Blankinship writes, "Such

armed struggle became known as *jihad* and remained the most salient policy of the caliphate till the end of Umayyad rule in 132/750."[8]

The transition from the mundane or materially driven fighting of pre-Islamic Arabia to the sacred, divinely sanctioned warring of Islam occurred within a surprisingly short period. "It represents a jump rather than a slow evolutionary change from the standpoint of cultural evolution,"[9] Reuven Firestone tells us, adding that although earlier factors undoubtedly had some influence on this change, the watershed can be isolated to the few years following the Hijra in 622 C.E. Firestone describes how it was during the Medinan period that the Prophet Muhammad and his followers came increasingly to identify themselves in religious rather than kinship affiliation, and that it is this change, in conjunction with the particular history of conflict between the Meccans and the early Muslims, that stimulated the transition. The transition was neither smooth nor without its detractors. The various — at times contradictory — passages in the Quran about non-Muslims, detractors and enemies are indicative of the development of holy war in Islam.

In Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad and his followers tended to be moderate with regards to war or any kind of physically aggressive behaviour against their detractors, even in the face of aggression committed against them. However in Madina, kinship no longer functioned to define relationships within the *ummah* (world community of Muslims) and the new members of the community had to define relationships increasingly in ideological terms. As the Prophet's leadership strengthened, the nature of the *ummah* became one of religious fellowship. The fervent pre-Islamic cultural attachment to kinship was transferred to the religious community. Firestone explains that it was this transference in conjunction with the growth in solidarity engendered by a severe outside threat that allowed the possibility of war based on religious rather than kinship solidarity.[10]

The doctrine of the war *jihad* is defined clearly in the Quran as are its purposes. Muslims are required to go out to fight in God's path against unbelievers (ii:190, 244) or to make monetary contributions to the war effort (lvii:10). Such contributions are a loan to God that God will repay manifold (ii:245). Only those who either fight or spend in God's path are the truly sincere (xlix:15). Those holding back are threatened with both divine and worldly punishments and denounced as hypocrites (ix:42–52; xlviii:16). Great rewards in the afterlife are specified for those killed.

There are many conflicting Quranic verses regarding attitudes towards unbelievers. They range from orders to approach them peacefully to unconditional commands to fight them. In order to explain these differences, scholars

have had recourse to the theory of abrogation or *naskh*. They hold that the various verses regulating dealings with unbelievers contained prescriptions that had relevance only for a certain period. When the situation changed, other verses were revealed abrogating the previous ones. This culminated in the absolute and unconditional command to fight the unbelievers, which was revealed during the last years of the Prophet's lifetime. The first period was one of preaching, subsequently engagement in discussion with unbelievers, then after the *hijrah* when the Muslim community was continuously harassed by the Makkans, Muslims were given permission to fight and finally the unconditional command to fight all unbelievers was sent down, abrogating all earlier verses, i.e., "fighting is prescribed to you although it is distasteful to you" (2:216).

Thus *jihad* is ordained to be waged defensively, so that the worship of God may be pursued freely in the earth. "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged; and verily, God is most powerful for their aid" (22:39–40). This element of *jihad* as "defensive" is a very significant — the understanding that waging *jihad* is never an aggression because war is forbidden except for two reasons: self-defence and the propagation of the Islamic faith. In the classical tradition, waging war even in self-defence is defined by clear rules and includes strictures such as not to kill civilians, women and children, and that assassination and ambush are forbidden.

A contradiction lies in the Quran itself: it forbids the use of force as simple aggression but allows it as legitimate if it is defensive and serves the spread of Islam. Verse ii:190 is categorical in forbidding aggression — "and fight (*qaatilu*) in the way of Allah those who fight you, But do not transgress limits; For God loveth not aggressors." So *jihad* is enjoined in retaliation against those who fight against Muslims (and history shows that this injunction has been invoked to include other Muslims) — sura ii:190; or have driven the believers out of home and family (ii:191, 246). Such defensive justifications are the source of the legitimacy invoked by Muslim extremists and militants, premised on the acute sense of victimhood that prevails in the Muslim world because of colonialism, the displacement of Palestinians, the economic and cultural hegemony of globalisation, constricted democratic and economic capabilities in many Muslim states that are deemed westernised, and ruthless domination by the US. These justifications are both precursor and context of the current invocation of the "righteous war" — *jihad*.

A brief examination of any of the calls to *jihad* — whether at the turn of the 20th century or by Osama bin Laden — will show evidence of this

formula to legitimate defensive violence to "protect Islam and Muslims". This justification of defending Islam and Muslims is almost always contextualised against a colonial, or occupying and invariably Western "Other". Key suspects and self-confessed Bali bombers invoked the war against Afghanistan, their antagonism towards foreigners drinking alcohol and partying, and how as Muslims they were obliged to defend oppressed Muslims as stipulated in the Quran. Likewise, in Osama bin Laden's "Letter to America", he poses the question, "Why are we fighting and opposing you?", which he answers with one line, "Because you attacked us and continue to attack us, because you attacked us in Palestine".[11] In response to the second question, "What are we calling you to, and what do we want from you?", he answers with a long rant about usury, intoxicants, gambling and women, stating "the first thing we are calling you to is Islam"[12] and then "the second thing we call you to is to stop your oppression . . .".[13] The formula of violence legitimated by invoking the defence of Islam and as retaliation to oppression is clear.

An Islamic social order is preferred not just by militants like Osama bin Laden but also by Muslims with a fundamentalist[14] orientation, as the security for all humanity. It is significant that the world in this Islamic social order is perceived in sharp dichotomies: the way of heedlessness and the way of submission to Islam are seen as institutionalised in the existence of Islamic and non-Islamic political entities. The former is described as the territory of war (*dar al harb*) in verses ix:107, v:33, ii:279, v:64, and vii:57, for example. The way of submission is the territory of Islam (*dar al islam)*. The struggle to extend the boundaries of the territory of Islam and thus of peace and social order is the *jihad*, the literal struggle of effort. It is a struggle that takes place at the intersection of heedlessness and submission.

Classical Islamic tradition has developed its own canonical view on the formation and evolution of holy war and, with some small variation among the legal schools, a more or less standard view on the meaning and application of divinely sanctioned war in general. The second main source of Islamic religious and legal practice, the *hadith* traditions attributed to the Prophet, supports what the Quran says on *jihad*. According to the *ahadith* (plural of "*hadith*"), waging *jihad* in God's path is specifically defined as a duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim (male). But it is important to note that nonmilitary types of *jihad* appear in the *ahadith.* Thus, Bukhari tell us that performing the pilgrimage to Mecca is equated with performing the war *jihad* and that the women's *jihad* is the pilgrimage, although women may also go out to war with the men in noncombatant roles. Qurtubi tells us that building a mosque to transmit the knowledge and religion of Islam is called the best kind of *jihad*.

Finally, in a tradition which spiritualises and dematerialises the concept, Ibn Mubarak relates that the true fighter in God's path (*mujahid*) is described as he who struggles against himself by himself. A non-canonical tradition even calls this the greater *jihad* in comparison to the military one, which is lesser. There is a well-known *hadith* attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that states that the only true *jihad* is that waged to exalt God's word. "However the overwhelming majority of *ahadith* refer to the military struggle when they use the term *jihad*,"[15] states Khalid Blankinship.

In the context of exhortations to wage war in the Quran and *ahadith*, it is imperative to understand the Quran and *ahadith* also as reflecting a specific history, and a material context. At the same time, it is crucial to reiterate the polyvalence of the term *jihad* especially after the first century of Islam — it is a struggle that includes *qital* or warfare, but also the struggle with one's own heart, the attempt to bring oneself into accord with the will of God. The means enjoined as appropriate to this struggle are prayer, study, and various forms of inner-worldly asceticism. The logic is that it makes little sense to claim status as a *mujahid*, struggling to bring guidance to the world, if there is no corresponding growth in one's own awareness of God. Thus the whole enterprise of *jihad*, especially in its later personifications, is within a context of sanctity, of the struggle to a fidelity to Islam. This is far different from the more common understanding that *jihad* is merely a call to violence and a declaration of war.

The classical books on *fiqh* do not contain much information on the definition and purpose of *jihad*. When modern *fuqaha* accepted the principle of peaceful relations between an Islamic nation and the rest of the world, a theory was required for deciding what wars against non-Muslims were legal and could be called *jihad* and what wars were not. Thus the idea of *jihad* as *bellum justum* won through. Some argue that the idea of a just war already existed in classical Islam, invoking the Arab historian Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), who distinguishes between *hurub jihad wa-adl* (wars of *jihad*) and justice and *hurb baghy wa-fitnah* (wars of sedition and persecution).[16] It is however doubtful whether Ibn Khaldun's statement may be regarded as a legal distinction between just and unjust wars in the modern sense. Nevertheless it is not unjustified to speak of *jihad* as *bellum justum* or just war in classical Islam, in terms of the rules for initiating war as described earlier.

The *fuqaha* give as the common meaning of the word *jihad* as exerting oneself, but define it legally as fighting the unbelievers by striking them, taking their property, demolishing their places of worship, smashing their idols and the like. Some write about the "greater *jihad*" denoting a more spiritual

activity like fighting one's evil inclinations. Others distinguish between the *jihad* of the heart, to struggle against one's sinfulness, and the *jihad* of the hand, which is the administering of disciplinary measures. Finally there is the *jihad* of the sword, which is to fight the unbelievers for religion's sake. "This last meaning however, is always meant when the word *jihad* is used without qualification. The direct purpose of *jihad* is the strengthening of Islam, the protection of believers and the voiding of the earth of unbelief. The ultimate aim is the complete supremacy of Islam, as one can learn from K 2:193, 8:39 and 9:33,"[17] writes Rudolph Peters. Ultimately, Sunni theorists therefore understood force to be a possible and useful means of extending the territory of Islam and thus a means in the quest for peace. While force should never be the first resort, it could be justified under certain conditions: that there must be just cause; an invitation/declaration of Muslim intentions must be communicated with enemy authorities inviting them to accept Islam; the intention to fight and the invitation to accept Islam is to be conveyed by someone with the right authority on behalf of the Muslim community and not by individual Muslims; the war must be conducted in accordance with Islamic values — this includes fighting not for the spoils of war or personal glory but for the cause of God, using the minimum force required for victory, and discriminating between the guilty and innocent as they attack enemy targets. Obviously modern Muslim militants who claim to wage *jihad* in the Islamic tradition and in the name of Islam have little knowledge of or concern for these strictures.

However, despite the enormous size of the caliphate and the ideology of *jihad* which supported it, the caliphate did not endure for centuries like the Roman and Chinese empires, but suffered a sudden and unexpected disruption after which it was never reconstituted. This came about before the end of the rule of the Umayyad family in 750 CE. Because of this disruption which began with the civil wars of 740–750 CE and culminated in the replacement of the Ummayad dynasty with the Abassids, the political unity of Islam and Muslims crumbled after 740 CE.

This meant that *jihad* stopped on all frontiers, with only a few exceptions. It also meant a fundamental change in the way Muslims looked at the world, thus helping to shape the future course of Islam. Without expansion as a main cause, Muslims became introspective, turning their attention to the internal ordering of their own society. The principle of the equality of the believers of all different origins and stations in life was strengthened, forging the notion of the *ummah* or community of believers. With the failure of the universal war *jihad*, more emphasis began to be placed on the peaceful spiritual quest, even though the concept of religiously sanctioned warfare remained "on the

books" to be invoked if needed. But the peaceful transformation of *jihad* after the first century of Islam, and Islam's evolution as a religion of peace enhanced Islam's ability to draw non-Muslims without large-scale warfare.

Jihad in Revivalist Literature, and the Invocation and Manipulation of *Jihad* by Militants

By the end of the nineteenth century, the idea that *jihad* is defensive warfare became current again in the Middle East — especially in Egypt — through the works of Muhammad 'Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida. Rida formulated how *jihad* is waged as a reaction against outside aggression, i.e., "everything that is mentioned in the Quran with regard to the rules of fighting, is intended (to be understood) as defence against enemies that fight the Muslims because of their religion".[18] Rida describes these as various forms of aggression against which *jihad* is lawful, including a direct attack on the territory of Islam or the suspicion thereof, and also the oppression of Muslims residing outside the boundaries of a Muslim nation.

Rudolph Peters describes how this perspective of *jihad* played a significant part in early resistance against colonial conquest. He argues that in a society where the ideology is entirely dominated by religion, wars and revolts — regardless of their actual causes — acquire a religious dimension in that their aims, justifications and appeals for support are expressed in religious terms. He then states:

> It is precisely the doctrine of *jihad* that provided this dimension in Islamic history. Its basic idea, the struggle of Moslems against unbelievers, self-evidently developed when the nascent Islamic state was at constant war against the surrounding non-Moslem enemies, and was elaborated during the wars of conquest. Then it was codified as a doctrine in the works on *fiqh* and could be invoked whenever Moslems had to fight unbelievers or heretics. Thus it is natural that the *jihad* doctrine played a significant part in early resistance against colonial conquest.

Peters suggests that it is precisely European colonial expansion, however, that enabled the transformation of the *jihad* doctrine and decline of its political significance. Peters argues that colonialisms' ideological attacks on Islam as well as the social and economic transformations of Muslim society, led to a gradual replacement of political ideology based on religious cohesion by one based on ethnic and cultural cohesion — which is nationalism. This chronology and explanation differ considerably from Khalid Y. Blankinship,

who argues that *jihad* evolved into its peaceful etymology after the first century of Islam and the end of the Muslim empire. Both hypotheses are coherent in understanding the decline — but not elimination — of the salience of *jihad*.

But by the early 20th century, there is another shift in the evolution of *jihad*. In contemporary Islamic fundamentalism (I make this distinction because there is also Christian, Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism) we find a new understanding of *jihad* as an expression of an "Islamic world revolution". This concept can be traced to Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian political preacher who is seen as the intellectual father of Islamic fundamentalism. It is no exaggeration to describe his writing as enormously influential even today, especially among younger educated Muslims. His basic missionary message was that world peace can be achieved only under the banner of Islam, within the framework of *jihad* as an expression of "world revolution". But this message is couched in a profoundly polemical and furious anti-American and anti-Western idiom, especially after his return from the United States (1948–1950). The Gulf War and Western efforts to reorder the Middle East, support Israel, root out Al Qaeda and to overthrow Saddam Hussein, gave and continue to give a great boost to Qutb's indictments of the West as the enemy of Islam. For Qutb, man-centred cultural modernity has affected the West adversely, and was now turning to corrupt the Islamic world. Therefore in this distrust of modernity, he exhorted an unrestrained theocentrism that leaves no room for democracy in the sense of the rule of the people by the people. Only Allah, the supreme sovereign, rules.

Bassam Tibi describes how the exposure of the world of Islam to modernity and to its rational worldview is, since Qutb, the point of departure in the political and social thought of Islamic fundamentalism. The principle subjectivity of the human being and his/her self-determination as a free individual, entitled to certain rights, is the major achievement of cultural modernity, but Qutb sought to return the individual to the community as simply one element in a collectivity under the *ummah*. In Qutb's view, Muslims have forgotten *al-taghallub* (superiority), the hallmark of Islam. Tibi writes how *jihad* is the recourse:

> Following the footsteps of Qutb, current fundamentalists consider the struggle against Muslim governments and against those individual Muslims who have fallen into *jahiliyya* (preIslamic ignorance) to be their hitherto "neglected duty". Only *jihad* can lead to reestablishing the *nizam Islami*/Islamic order, even in Islam's heartland.[19]

Tibi's analysis, published in 1998, is almost prescient of Osama bin Laden's "Letter to America" which was translated and circulated in November 2002.

In that letter, Osama threatens *jihad* by an Islamic order, telling America to "prepare to fight with the Islamic nation . . . that was able to dismiss and destroy the previous evil Empires like yourself . . . ".[20]

At the heart of the militants' strategy stands this reinterpretation of *jihad,* taking it back to its original roots in the expansion of the Muslim empire, but repudiating the strict rules it enjoined (such as that civilians, women and children should not be harmed) and negating the subsequent evolution of the term into its peaceful etymology and usage. Thus, *jihad* is invoked and filled with a new meaning, but the new context to be legitimised is expressed in classical Islamic terms. Thus, for example militants and even fundamentalists accuse fellow Muslims whom they consider to be influenced by secular modernity of *kufr* or heresy, a quantum leap in logic or even in terms of the rationalisations for such accusations that are offered in Muslim jurisprudence. This manipulation of a modern fracture or difference but understood and explained in classical Islamic terms is sufficient to justify the slaying of Muslim intellectuals, journalists, artists and lawyers as we have seen in Egypt and elsewhere. Yet, in the classical doctrine there is no justification for the slaying of individuals. The Quran forbids assassination and ambush attacks.

In similar vein, the mantra of political Islam that Islam is "*din wa dawla*/ unity of faith and the state" is a creative rendering of text and tradition. This formula attributed to Islam exists neither in the Quran nor in the *hadith*, nor is it to be found in any of the authoritative classical writings. The same can be said of the fundamentalist concepts of the "Islamic state" and of *hakimiyyat Allah*/God's rule. As Bassam Tibi among others insist, "both are recent additions to Islamic thought, and both are distinctly fundamentalist in character".[21] Tibi describes Islamic fundamentalism as not simply an intra-Islamic affair but rather one of the pillars of an emerging new world disorder.

Tibi states that the new world disorder is much more than turmoil in the light of broader ramifications already made credible by the crisis of the nation-state in most countries of Asia and Africa. Writing in 1998, Tibi described fundamentalism as "much more than extremism or terrorism" — it is rather a powerful challenge to the existing order of the international system of secular nation-states. Given that this institution of a secular nation-state is western in origin, the revolt against it is also a revolt against the West. He links Islam with this argument because it is both a world religion and a major civilisation, embracing a fifth of the people of the planet. However, the event described as 9/11 has cast Tibi's exception of terrorism and extremism as the overwhelming challenges to the world-order in a different light, but his insights are nevertheless significant in aligning fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism as

challenges beyond their national boundaries, to a world order represented by the West. Islamic fundamentalists envisage a new world order in the twenty-first century that is led by Islam. This dynamic perpetuates the hegemonic paradigm, merely substituting Islam for the hegemony of the West because there are virtually no states today that have only Muslim populations.

A closer look shows clearly that inter-civilisational equality and justice is not the outlook of the Islamic fundamentalists, who envisage a new world order that is led by Islamic civilisation in the twenty-first century. Tibi and others like him (such as Bruce Lawrence for example, in *Defenders of God*, 1996) who wrote before 9/11, were mostly dismissive of the "Islamic threat" even as they correctly identified its dynamic. They saw fundamentalism as a challenge, but more as a political challenge rather than as enabling a militaristic one.

Part of the origin of such perspectives must lie in the political correctness of post-Orientalism, when any critique of embedded, contextual Islam was received as if it was a critique of all of Islam and thrown into the quagmire of the "demonisation" of Islam. In his path-breaking text *Orientalism*, published in 1978, Edward Said described what constitutes the West-constructed knowledge about the Orient — including Islam — according to Western tropes and stereotypes, racial biases and colonial agendas. Most academics in post-Orientalism mode took great pains to try and end such bigotry, even if many systemic structures that maintained Orientalist perspectives remained. This was laudable, but like many such paradigms it also evolved into considerable "policing" of academic expression, analysis and critique to ensure a political correctness about non-Muslims speaking and writing about Islam. Others such as the French scholar Andree Feillard, who works on Islam in Indonesia, have shared similar concerns. I recall presenting a paper at a panel of the American Academy of Religion meeting in 1997, where I offered an analysis and critique of the Malaysian modernity and industrialisation project which was legitimated by the government by references to its compatibility with Islam. A number of older, Caucasian male professors took exception to my paper, advising me afterwards that as a non-Muslim, my critique of Islam was offensive. I pointed out that my critique was of an application of Islam and it was not the same as critiquing the Prophet of Islam or tenets of Islam. I also stated that although I respected their sensitivity, I could not expiate their Caucasian, Western guilt of Orientalism; and that I was a non-Muslim from a Muslim nation. As such, I was someone who lived in, was shaped by, and functioned as a citizen of a Muslim nation — and that as such, I had some "insider" status that made my critique not only legitimate, but also relevant to the evolution of Islam in context.

However, more significant reasons for not quite foreseeing the militancy of 9/11 and Osama and his parallels around the world are simply chronological: that the revolt against secularism, the West, modernity and globalisation through peaceful means did not make enough of a difference. This disappointment arose due to several things: the slow pace of economic progress and development in the Arab world, the constriction of democratic space (and in some instances, virtually no such space at all), and the growing disenfranchisement of Palestinians. From this sense of failure and of being rejected, we find the turn to the resources within religion to not just legitimate but sanctify violence to enable change, under the guise of a just war that is defined in text and tradition.

The revivalists and Salafiyyah (fundamentalists) in a simplistic and direct application of text and tradition, dispense with the complex negotiations by the *faqih* (jurist) — which is the deft juggling of numerous sources and principles of legislation. Even the most respected university in the world for Sunni Muslims — al-Azhar in Cairo — on the occasion of a war or revolt has extolled the virtues of *jihad* and the bliss of the martyrs in the hereafter, quoting the relevant Quranic verses and *ahadith.* An example is a booklet published by al-Azhar University on the occasion of the June war in 1967 entitled *al-jihad fi l-Islam* (1967). It contains chapters on *jihad* in the Quran, an enumeration of verses with regard to *jihad,* to the reward of the martyrs and to the Jews being "the worst enemies of humanity", and to *jihad* in the text of the *sunna* and *hadith.* The book contains a final chapter with the title "Marvellous Islamic Images of Sacrifice" dealing with feats of Muslim heroism and contempt of death from the Prophet's time up to the Palestine war of 1948.

However, it is also significant that in the latter half of the twentieth century, many sheiks of al-Azhar were at pains, in their modern interpretation, to combat reference to *jihad* as justification of violent acts, and did so in the name of combating terrorism. They argue that *jihad* is a peaceful concept that entails the struggle of Islam against poverty, illiteracy and disease. They plead for the spread of Islam by peaceful, not violent means. The late Shaykh of al-Azhar, Jadulhaq, has contributed to this modern interpretation; he has made clear that a distinction must be drawn between Islamic *jihad* as exertion for worthy purposes, and *jihad musallah* as resort to violence.[22] As this distinction clarifies, Islam is a religious belief. In contrast, Islamic fundamentalism is a political ideology, and the two are different issues. In the aftermath of 9/11, Abd al-Aziz b. Abdallah al al-Shaykh, the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, and Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid al-Tantawi, the Shaykh of al-Azhar University, issued *fatawa* (plural of *fatwa* or a legal opinion) stating that killing

civilians was not valid in interpretations of *jihad*. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who is widely quoted by Muslims in Southeast Asia, also modified his previous support for *jihad* and stated that they were only to be used against Israeli soldiers. But David Cook tells us, "No other prominent shaykhs followed their examples, and all three of these distinguished clerics have now retracted their opposition to 'martyrdom operations' at least with regard to Israel."[23]

Nevertheless, there are important Muslim voices — both national and international — that are self-critical, urging their fellow Muslims to look at Islam introspectively and critically. In Malaysia where the Sultans of each state are the head of Islam in their respective states, the Crown Prince of the state of Perak told Muslims that if they were perceived negatively by the world, they were also to blame. Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah said that even though it was a bitter pill to swallow, the Muslim *ummah* must be courageous enough to face the fact that negative and ugly perceptions of Islam were the result of a small group of Muslims whose thinking had gone astray and who wreaked their disappointment, anger, revenge and hatred.[24] Likewise, the Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Ahmed Al-Talib is reported to have said that some Muslims have to accept the blame for contributing to the present negative image of Islam and that such negative perceptions arose because of their misconduct.[25] In response to the bombing of a complex of foreign residences in Riyadh in May 2003, Saudi Arabia's Committee of Senior *Ulama* (those knowledgeable about Islam — equivalent of clergy in Islam) issued a detailed statement describing why the bombing was prohibited in Islam. Similarly, in July 2003 at a meeting titled the "World *Ulama* Conference" that was convened in Kuala Lumpur by the Malaysian government, *ulama* led by Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid al-Tantawi roundly condemned terrorism, stating that the killing of innocent civilians has no place in Islam, and that terrorists threaten Muslim countries as well as Western nations if left unchecked. "Whereas *jihad* is allowed in Islam to defend one's land, to help the oppressed, the difference between *jihad* in Islam and extremism is like the earth and the sky,"[26] Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid al-Tantawi is reported to have said. It is significant that Tantawi delineates the conditions for *jihad* in the traditional sources, thereby indicating also the validity of *jihad* as defensive war even as he denounces extremism. These shifts over martyrdom operations, *jihad* and militancy reflect the reality of *ulama* who are conflicted, much the same way that many Muslims are, about events that beset them in a post-9/11 world. This ambivalence is intensifying. It is manifested as both outrage at terrorist attacks against humanity and outrage at the treatment of Muslims and of Muslim nations throughout their history, but especially since 9/11.

Jihad and Its Southeast Asian Contexts

Those who claim a generic and therefore authentic Islam for the purpose of power and legitimacy, wield a very powerful rhetoric, such as "Muslims must . . . ", "Islam requires . . . " or "In Islam . . . ". This leaves the state and everyone else scrambling around to assert equal legitimacy, to play the (futile) game of catch-up. Islam has no Vatican, and there are many sources of authority and legitimation. Even the definitive among the huge corpus of texts that constitute *tafsir* (or exegesis of the Quran) contain differences of opinion. So a closer examination of claims about a generic and "true" Islam provide evidence of how these claimants themselves are selective about their sources for authority and legitimation.

However, even those who are struggling against extremists maintain the paradigm of the premise of "true" Islam. I suggest that this strategy is counterproductive. There are many examples: in a visit to Egypt and in an address at al-Azhar University, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, the Prime Minister of Malaysia used the strategy of invoking a "true" Islam. He chided Muslims in his speech, saying "it is simply because we refuse to adhere to the true teachings of Islam and to strive to better our lot on this earth as much as we prepare for the life in the hereafter" (*The New Straits Times*, 23 January 2003). In his keynote address to the World *Ulama* Conference, the Prime Minister of Malaysia put the *ulama* themselves under scrutiny, stating that they were among the most influential members of the Muslim community and it was important to examine critically the teachings of the *ulama*, both past and present. Using his strategy of juxtaposing a weak Islam and *ummah* that needs to defend itself, he lashed out — as he often does — against the wrong interpretations, stating "the sad fate of Muslims today is their own doing, their failure to practise the true teachings of Islam".[27]

Recourse to the "true teachings" of Islam are powerful, but the issue of credibility is also at stake: who is more credible in interpreting religion — a brilliant but nevertheless non-theologically trained, non-Arabic speaking Muslim leader, or someone who claims the title of *alim* and has the credentials of speaking and reading Arabic, being educated in the Middle East — perhaps even at al-Azhar, and who exemplifies piety with his robe, cap and beard? For many ordinary Southeast Asian Muslims, it is the latter.

As I have argued elsewhere, it is a core-periphery dynamic that decides in favour of the person with a genealogy in the Middle East. This genealogy with Islam in the Middle East is important because in the Muslim countries of Southeast Asia, especially after twenty years of Islamic revivalism and

Islamisation of state and identity that have grown exponentially, the Islam of the Middle East defines more than it ever did. The core-periphery dynamic, with the heartland of Islam as core and Southeast Asian Muslims as periphery, gives rise to an infantile religiosity among many ordinary Southeast Asian Muslims. This situation occurs because of an inability to read the huge corpus of theology, philosophy, exegesis and jurisprudence that is the rich heritage of a Muslim, most of which is in Arabic. Therefore, more than in the Middle East, many Muslims in the periphery focus on ritual and outward manifestations of piety, and rely on the mediators of Islam — those who are *ulama* — to interpret and guide. What transpires then is an abdication by many ordinary Muslims of the ability to decide and define how Islam will evolve in their particular milieu, giving power to the guardians of tradition and the final arbiters of law and life — the *ulama* and those who claim to be authoritative, and whose fidelity is not only to literal and selective applications of text and tradition but also to how this coheres in the heartland, the Middle East. In such a dynamic, despite his trenchant efforts and growing stature as the leader of a successful, modern, Muslim nation, for the Malaysian *ummah* the Prime Minister does not always win the struggle over whose Islam is the "true Islam".

Perhaps an alternative strategy would be to confront and debunk the claims and strategies of fundamentalists and militants, rather than playing along with them, each side trying to outdo the other in authenticity about "true Islam" with both sides ultimately distorting and manipulating Islam. The danger in playing catch-up with fundamentalists and militants is that modern governments are doomed to lose. They cannot adopt the Islamic idiom and culture wholesale because their constituencies are beyond the Muslims in their population. They cannot even adopt the distinctive Arabic dress of Islamists that *ulama* can, because their national objectives are framed in modern, global systems and culture. But for a Southeast Asian Muslim *ummah* in the periphery of the Islamic world, many (but certainly not all) Muslims perceive everything in the heartland the Middle East as authentic and best, and thus receive fundamentalists and militants as more pious when they adopt the idiom, language and culture of the heartland. Thus moderate Muslim states are doomed to failure in this holier-than-thou competition.

But the issue is not only the power over theology and idiom. As stated earlier, Islamic fundamentalists and militants view themselves as challengers of modernity, not as products of it. Yet they use the very tools of modernity to achieve their means: cellular phones, the Internet, democratic processes to gain power. It has also become increasingly clear that some militants are in fact from major urban areas, have studied in the West, have access to the

fruits of modernity and development. In other words, they are people who are themselves dislocated and suffering the disruptions of the failed introduction of modernity into Islamic societies (and failed states). Their greater familiarity with the West makes their angst against it all the more formidable. This then is the source of their greater receptiveness to the fundamentalist and militants' message, turning against the West and locating such exhortation in invocations of classical text and tradition about *jihad* that divide the world into non-Muslim heedlessness and the submission to Islam that brings a perfect social order.

Islamic fundamentalists offer an ideology of salvation, an ideology that promises to deal successfully with all problems resulting from uncontrolled demographic growth, economic stagnation or even decline. The promise is a legitimate Islamic government, one that complies with the *shariah*, that will bring quick and easy solutions for all problems. Fundamentalists in power, however, such as those in Sudan and Iran, have proven to be quite unable to deal with many of their problems, and their poor performance cannot be explained away simply by reference to the obstacles put in their way by the West. But these regimes deflect disillusionment through their successful presentation of a Western conspiracy (*mu'amarah*) directed against Islam, and by focusing on their efforts to be "true" Islamic states.

The problem of distrust and suspicion is evident in the many conspiracy theories that quite a few Muslims believe. This proclivity to conspiracy theories must be understood as layered and legitimated not only by colonialism, western media hegemony, the worldwide angst of the *ummah* over the disenfranchisement of Palestinians and even the last twenty years at least of the political correctness of post-Orientalism. The proclivity to conspiracy theories must be understood also in terms of the classical doctrines for *jihad* — that it is legitimate in defence of Islam and oppressed Muslims — that were explained earlier in this essay, and which fundamentalists and militants deploy with powerful effect.

But the power of anti-Western rhetoric cannot be underestimated. We have seen how Saddam Hussein, in labelling the Gulf War a *jihad*, claimed to battle the West in the name of Islam and received support of not only most of the fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world, but even some measure of sympathy from moderate, modern Muslims. The sense of disenchantment, disempowerment, and demonisation is constantly reiterated, invoked as a premise of many statements and sermons, even as exhortations from moderate Muslim governments to their citizens to modernise. For example, the preface to many arguments by leaders of modern and moderate Muslims governments are often

that "Muslims are weak" and therefore they need to embrace modernity and economic progress and development so as to achieve wealth and well-being. Dr. Mahathir Mohamed the Prime Minister of Malaysia has used this formula with considerable success in forging an Islam that is contiguous with modernity and technological progress and development.[28]

However, these sort of arguments premised on the inherent weakness or disability of Muslims also create considerable feelings of indignation and of being wronged, upon which it is then easier for those who are left out of economic advancement to accept another solution: a *jihad* against what is described as the rich, colonial and neo-colonial West and all it is accused of (and sometimes justifiably) in its history with Muslims. This then enables the connection with a *jihad* that has, in classical context, been defined as "legitimate" because it is defensive especially of those Muslims who are "oppressed".

In addition, arguments of cultural relativism — demarcating Asian and post-colonial premise against the West — that are employed by many Southeast Asian leaders, often enable and reiterate the turn to the alternative that fundamentalists and militants offer. To invoke righteousness and legitimacy, the "wicked West" premise prefaces an argument or exhortation so that the point being put across, by default in post-colonial premise, is justified and legitimate. This has been a strategy of many post-colonial third world states: but it is a dangerous one in a world that needs to enable Muslims to feel a part of it, not alienated from it. Not enough of us are aware that most Muslims outside the West view the Gulf War and all major military engagements with Muslims since then, as a clash between their own civilisation and that of the West. The fact that books and articles expounding this view were still being published by Muslims years after the Gulf War supports the observation that most Muslims continue to believe that the war was a "crusade of the West" against their civilisation. In 2001, I heard the late Fadzil Noor who was leader of the Malaysian Muslim opposition political party, PAS, describe the US bombing of Afghanistan as the beginning of a new crusade against Islam. This perception has magnified a hundredfold after the war on terror and with the war on Iraq.

All the configurations described above are sufficient to incite the call for a militant *jihad*, which is seen as the righteous and legitimate Islamic "response" to a powerful "external threat", not an Islamic "initiative" — harking back to the classical justification for *jihad* which is that it is waged in defence of Islam and oppressed Muslims.

The persuasive coherence of this moral justification, reiterated by current context and rhetoric, should not be underestimated. A Pew report, based on

44 national surveys and interviews with more than 38,000 people, states that sizable percentages of Muslims in many countries with significant Muslim populations also believe that suicide bombings can be justified in order to defend Islam from its enemies. While majorities see suicide bombings as justified in only two nations polled (Lebanon and the Ivory Coast), more than a quarter of Muslims in another nine nations (Nigeria, Bangladesh, Jordan, Pakistan, Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal and Indonesia) subscribe to this view.[29]

In a more recent survey conducted after the war in Iraq — in May 2003 — Pew reports the effects of the war in Iraq: that the Muslim world has been further inflamed, that the war on Iraq has softened the support for the war on terrorism, and significantly weakened global public support for the pillars of the post-World War II era — the UN and the North Atlantic Alliance.[30] The remarks of Andrew Kohut, Director of the Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press elaborated on how the US is perceived by the Islamic world. He describes the "serious problem" facing the US abroad in terms of its very poor public image in the Muslim world, especially in the Middle East/Conflict Area. Kohut said:

> Dislike of America undoubtedly reflects dislike of US policies in the Middle East. In a survey of opinion leaders released by the Pew Research Centre in 2001, a majority in Islamic countries told us that US support of Israel is the top reason that people in their countries dislike America. But the backlash against the US-led war on terror is also a big part of the problem. Unlike in much of the rest of the world, the war on terrorism is opposed by majorities in ten of the 11 predominantly Muslim countries surveyed by Pew. This includes countries outside the Middle East/Conflict Area, such as Indonesia and Senegal, where majorities still held favourable opinions of the US.

Even as *jihad* will define some of this backlash, it is imperative to recall that the evolution of the concept of *jihad* is complex. All words evolve continually — they are what we invest in their etymology, invoked for our reality. It is useful for us to bear in mind that today more than ever in its history, *jihad* is being redefined, not just by those who distort it for violent ends. The whole world, together with Muslims, is ultimately responsible for what *jihad* will mean after this turning point in our collective history.

Notes

1. "Text: Osama bin Laden's 1998 Interview", reproduction of the interview given by the Saudi dissident to the Al-Jazeera television channel in 1998, printed in full in the Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram*, 8 October 2001.

2. "Bali Bombing Suspect Apologises", *The New Straits Times* (Malaysia), 12 February 2003.
3. "Bali Bomber Was Disgusted with Behaviour of Foreign Tourists", *The New Straits Times*, 17 July 2003.
4. Michael Laffan, "A Watchful Eye: The Meccan Plot of 1881 and Changing Dutch Perceptions of Islam in Indonesia", *Archipel*, Vol. 63, No. 1 (2002), pp. 79–108.
5. "Shiite Authority Declares *jihad* Against Occupiers", *Al Ahram Weekly*, 16 April 2003, available at <www.al-ahram.com>.
6. "Resentment Against Americans Mounting", *The New Sunday Times*, 8 June 2003.
7. Available at <www.islaam.com/Article.aspx?id=395>.
8. Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), p. 1.
9. Reuven Firestone, *Jihad: The Origin of Holy War in Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 127.
10. Firestone, *jihad*, p. 130.
11. "Full text: bin Laden's 'Letter to America' ", available at <www.observer.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,845724.html>.
12. "Full text: bin Laden's 'Letter to America' ".
13. "Full text: bin Laden's 'Letter to America' ".
14. I struggle with using terms that are expedient in indicating conservatism, literal adherence to text and tradition, radicalism, moderation, etc. I am self-conscious about the stereotyping and paternalism inherent in such expedience, and acknowledge the limitations and problems encapsulated in their etymology.
15. Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State*.
16. 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun, in 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahid Wafi, ed., *Muqaddimah* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Bayan al-Arabi, 1965), p. 823.
17. Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1979), p. 10.
18. Rashid Rida., *Al-wahy al-Muhammadi* (Cairo: Dar al-Manar, 1955), p. 35.
19. Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 57.
20. "Full text: bin Laden's 'Letter to America' ".
21. Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism*, p. 77.
22. Jadulhaq Ali Jadulhaq, *Bayan li al-nas* (Declaration to Humanity) (Cairo: al-Azhar Press, 1984).
23. David Cook, "The Implications of 'Martyrdom Operations' for Contemporary Islam", Unpublished Paper presented at Princeton University, 9 December 2002.
24. Raja Dr. Nazrin Shah, "Titih Ucapan Duli Yang Teramat Mulia Raja Muda Perak Darul Ridzuan Di Majlis Sambutan Maulidur Rasul Peringkat Negeri Perak 1424 Hijrah/2003 Masehi pada 13.5.2003" (Unpublished Text).
25. "Mufti Puts Blame on Some Muslims", *The New Straits Times*, 24 June 2003.

26. "Al-Azhar's Dr. Tantawi Leads the Way, Declaring Extremism the Enemy of Islam, and Saying Suicide Bombings Are 'Wrong' ", *The New Straits Times*, 12 July 2003.
27. "Examine Teachings of Ulama" (Text of the speech of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed), *The New Straits Times,* 11 July 2003.
28. See Patricia Martinez, "Islam, the Mahathir Administration and the New Malay Dilemma", in Ho Khai Leong and James Chin, eds., *Mahathir's Administration: Crisis and Governance* (Singapore: Times Book Publishers, 2001).
29. *The Pew Global Attitudes Project: What the World Thinks in 2002*, p. 5., available at <www.people-press.org>.
30. *Views of a Changing World 2003*, Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press, available at <www.people-press.org>.

II. *The Al Qaeda Factor*

Chapter 3

The Question of "Links" Between Al Qaeda and Southeast Asia[1]

Clive Williams M. G.

This chapter seeks to critique the precise meaning of "links" between Al Qaeda and regional groups and how analysts can approach this question with greater care and rigour. The Macquarie Dictionary defines links *inter alia* as "anything serving to connect one part or thing with another; a bond or tie". It would therefore be difficult to find a Muslim extremist organisation anywhere in the world that has not had "links" of some kind to Al Qaeda. But of course the media usually makes more of this aspect than is usually warranted.

The links from, or with, Al Qaeda can be of many kinds, and include:

- Al Qaeda funding for a spiritual leader's activities.
- Al Qaeda providing training in Afghanistan, Pakistan or elsewhere.
- Al Qaeda providing trainers and experts at a local level.
- Al Qaeda financing of regional operational activities.
- Al Qaeda financing of regional logistic support, such as weapons and explosives.
- Al Qaeda requesting regional operation.

Other links that bond or tie include:

- Shared combat or religious or training experiences in Afghanistan, Pakistan or Mindanao.

- Both parties providing sanctuary for wanted individuals.
- Meetings of activists to exchange views.
- Regional groups' support for Al Qaeda operations.

Various descriptors are used for Al Qaeda-linked Islamic extremist groups and individuals. At a regional level these may include:

- "Affiliated" groups that are generally recognised to be part of Al Qaeda's network, such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad.
- "Associated" groups and individuals that receive some support from Al Qaeda, but are basically free actors, such as Ramzi Yousef.
- "Empathetic" groups that are driven by local issues and have only marginal association with Al Qaeda, such as Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM), based in Indonesia.
- Regionally based Al Qaeda representatives, such as Omar Al-Faruq, Al Qaeda sleepers, and cell members.

Care and Rigour

A major difficulty in this area is that the information in the public domain and available to academics is only a small percentage of the total information available. Most of the information is only available to intelligence agencies, particularly those with access to AUSCANUKUS[2] data. Probably as much as two thirds of the more accurate information on terrorism is security classified at Secret level and above.[3] This puts academics at a serious disadvantage in terms of accurate and credible analysis.

Intelligence agencies are also capable of covert collection and sophisticated link analysis using phone call details and other information that connects individual terrorists and terrorist groups. This information is then analysed with proprietary software such as Watson.

When they have a reason to influence public opinion, government agencies, both AUSCANUKUS and others, can selectively release (or leak) information that supports a policy perspective with little prospect of being challenged by outsiders.

Even when government officials are prepared to talk to journalists or academics, it is usually off-the-record and only to those selected individuals who can be trusted to accurately portray what they have been told, without them raising difficult or contentious issues. Such off-the-record sessions are of course also deniable by the source if necessary.

At times, less knowledgeable government officials will, for various motives, including personal aggrandisement or revenge against rivals, give unofficial "background" briefings or leak classified material to journalists. Such individuals are normally cited anonymously by the researcher as "a Pakistani investigator" etc. They may be pushing a particular inaccurate point of view. This is very common in Indonesia and the Philippines. For this reason, I am generally opposed to the quoting of anonymous sources, or quoting information that cannot be checked against other sources.

It is of course easy for less scrupulous journalists to fabricate off-the-record interviews with anonymous individuals because they cannot be verified.

There are some traps in all of this for academics that may be privy to insider information. Because of the insatiable media demand for information on terrorism, a comment made by an academic in one location may be picked up by the media in another location and given unexpected prominence. To give you one Australian example, terrorism expert Zachary Abuza is one of the most diligent academics I know in terms of identifying sources and trying to check information. But on 11 November 2002, he was reported prominently in the Australian media as having said that Malaysian officials had told him that Hambali had visited Australia on at least one occasion.[4]

This caused a major security concern in Australia because, while we knew that Abu Bakar Bashir had visited on 11 occasions to preach, any visit by Hambali would have much more serious ramifications. A Hambali visit could have been to plan an operation — or put a JI sleeper cell in place for future use. You can imagine the unappreciated pressure the Australian security community came under as a result of this comment.

An intensive review of all Australian immigration records over recent years found no evidence of a visit by Hambali using any of his many aliases. Nor could any such visit be confirmed from intelligence records or human sources. I subsequently followed up with well-placed Malaysian officials who told me that in their view there was no substance to the information provided to Abuza.

On several occasions over the past year, I have come across unexpected or unusual media reporting of an aspect of terrorism. One example was the so-called plan by Afroz Abdul Razak to fly a plane into the Rialto Tower in Melbourne. On following such stories up, I have generally found that the journalist had "got it wrong". There are some traps therefore in relying on journalistic reporting. Much depends on whether the particular part of the media is responsible and whether the journalist has a good track record. I have found that Anthony Davis and Michael Ware, for example, are both reliable sources on Asia, whereas I steer clear of the Australian and British

tabloids. Beware too of the media celebrity who is "parachuted in" to cover a big story but has no local knowledge.

Other examples of questionable stories are the reports that appear from time to time about visits to the region by bin Laden or other senior Al Qaeda figures, and meetings that are alleged to have taken place — or who attended the ones that actually did take place. More and more terrorists seem to have attended the meeting facilitated in January 2000 by Yazid Sufaat, or the Hambali meeting in Bangkok in February 2002! Nevertheless, wrong information, once reported by the media, can become the conventional wisdom. One then sees the same factual errors being trotted out by generations of journalists and researchers.

Some former government employees, now reincarnated as academics, are in the fortunate position of being able to seek off-the-record government briefings, but it is difficult to come up with collateral information that allows the information provided to be checked or used.

This means that over the years the most accurate information available to researchers is that which has come from court records during the prosecution of terrorists. This is because prosecution officials can be charged with misrepresentation if they knowingly provide inaccurate information. Because of the Internal Security Act in Malaysia and Singapore, there is, as far as I know, no public access to the interview transcripts or evidence that has led to the alleged terrorists' incarceration.

Testimony to government hearings by government agencies is usually accurate because officials can be charged with misrepresentation if they knowingly provide inaccurate information. Few governments have been as open as in the past as the US Government in this respect. In all cases though the more sensitive intelligence information will be heard in camera.

The next best source of information is government documents — provided you can read between the lines!

The US State Department's annual *Patterns of Global Terrorism* is one such useful document.[5] The Counter-Terrorism Centre (CTC) at Langley, Virginia prepares it, and it then has a layer of policy applied by the State Department, which publishes it. Until 11 September 2001, the State Department had not paid a lot of attention to the document, so the policy overlay was a relatively thin veneer. Since 9/11, policy has been trowelled on, and the document has now become mainly a policy document, although it still contains the same useful CTC data. A particular benefit of *Patterns of Global Terrorism* is that it has been adjusted to provide a consistent trendline over the 20 years since it was first produced.

The Singapore Government has produced some valuable material on JI since December 2001, culminating in its latest comprehensive White Paper produced on 7 January 2003.[6] Other regional governments seem to have produced little of comparable value for researchers.

While academics are only operating with one third of the available information, they do have certain advantages over intelligence analysts. They build up expertise over many years, while intelligence analysts rarely stay in the same job for more than three years. They can also devote more attention to what they do have — while intelligence analysts are swamped with information, and always chasing deadlines. In fact, intelligence analysts seldom get to read all of their "take" — or to produce longer-term assessments from it.

Academics can also come across well to the public in parliamentary or similar briefings. Intelligence agency directors usually brief senior government officials after their intelligence analysts have briefed them. The directors' knowledge of the particular issue is well below that of their best analysts, so academics' oral briefings to government officials will compare favourably with theirs. While intelligence agencies have much better tactical information, academics generally have a better feel for trends and the overall strategic picture.

Rigour in selecting and analysing one's source material is however essential! It is important not to make extravagant claims or leaps in judgement based on information that cannot be substantiated — or which conveniently fits one's point of view. Remember the government knows far more than one does! It is a quick path to losing one's credibility, at least with government agencies.

Regional Links with Al Qaeda

Moving on then to what we believe to be the historical case in terms of regional links.

It is generally agreed that Osama bin Laden formed Al Qaeda in late 1988 or early 1989, to take advantage of the unique situation that prevailed at the end of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Bin Laden, as the key administrator for the mujahidin, had maintained comprehensive records of those who had passed through Pakistan on their way to the *jihad*, including from Southeast Asia, and those records provided an invaluable basis for the future Al Qaeda network.

One of the earliest manifestations of Al Qaeda type extremism entering the Southeast Asian region was the founding of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) by Abdurajak Janjalani in 1990. Janjalani is said to have met with bin Laden in Afghanistan and been encouraged by him to form a violent breakaway splinter

group in the southern Philippines when he returned to the Philippines from the *jihad*.

Various reports have bin Laden's brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa as having first visited the Philippines in 1991 to establish funding conduits to the MILF. Khalifa, who now runs a fish restaurant in Saudi Arabia, says he thinks he first went there in 1992. His role was to set up the charity network, which then allowed funding to be diverted to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and ASG.

Ramzi Yousef, who is variously described as an Al Qaeda operative, associate or fellow traveller, arrived in the Zamboanga area of the Philippines in 1994 via Malaysia. Al Qaeda senior members had apparently asked Yousef to travel to the Philippines and provide explosives training to Abu Sayyaf on Basilan, and then set up a cell in Manila. Yousef had become well known to Muslim extremists in Pakistan because of his organisation of the attack against the World Trade Centre in New York in February 1993. The Bojinka plot and Yousef's January 1995 escape from the Philippines back to Pakistan, again via Malaysia, only to be arrested by FBI agents in Pakistan in February 1995, is by now a familiar story.

Meanwhile Al Qaeda itself has shifted focus over the years. From 1989 to 1998 it was mainly involved in developing and linking the global network and assisting regional groups. In February 1998 we saw the announcement of the *fatwa* against Americans — including American civilians. The first Al Qaeda operation after that was the twin attacks on US embassies in East Africa on 7 August 1998. Since then, Al Qaeda has continued to conduct its own operations, often with local support, while still assisting regional groups to conduct their operations and activities.

It has never been easy to quantify Al Qaeda's links with Southeast Asia. There has certainly been scope for a substantial Al Qaeda operational structure based on those who had fought in Afghanistan. And there is a second support tier of those who had not — but are sympathetic to Al Qaeda's vision of a pan-Islamic caliphate, those who could relate to Wahhabism, and those who had settled in Southeast Asia over hundreds of years from Yemen, particularly the Hadramaut area — sometimes referred to as *hadramis*.

It has been alleged by the US that Kuwaiti national Omar Al-Faruq, who was arrested in Indonesia on 5 June 2002, was the senior Al Qaeda operative in the region, but it is not clear whether he had an Al Qaeda operational command structure within the region. Incidentally, I received a letter from the Kuwaiti embassy in Canberra denying that Faruq is a Kuwaiti and saying that he is really an Iraqi!

In terms of the number of Southeast Asians who fought in Afghanistan, no one, except perhaps Al Qaeda, seems to have much of an idea of the numbers. Estimates of Indonesian fighters vary from a few hundred to several thousand. Similarly, neither Malaysia nor the Philippines has any idea of their numbers. The same lack of knowledge applies to Australia. Zachary Abuza has estimated that 1,000 from the region fought in Afghanistan and perhaps 6,000 more were radicalised by attendance at religious schools in Pakistan.[7] This seems to be a reasonable and probably conservative estimate.

Recent Reports

We now turn to official reports concerning the "links". As mentioned earlier, one needs to think about why Government is releasing information to the public domain. If one sticks to the facts in a government document, one can usually obtain useful and reliable information. It is unlikely that a government document in a democratic society will deliberately present false and misleading information, but it can happen.

The US *Patterns of Global Terrorism* document is clearly going to push US policy on countering terrorism and list those entities that the US considers to be a threat to *its* interests.

The latest version of *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, the 2001 version,[8] includes both JI and the KMM under "Background Information on Other Terrorist Groups". It states that "recently arrested JI members in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines have revealed links with Al Qaeda".[9] It notes that some of the 15 arrested in December 2001 in Singapore had trained at Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan. It also notes that Al Qaeda-related material was found in several suspects' homes. In terms of aid, it notes that JI is probably self-financing with some possible Al Qaeda support.[10] It estimates the Malaysian cells at 200 members.

In relation to the KMM, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* states that "several of the arrested militants have reportedly undergone military training in Afghanistan, and some fought with the Afghan *mujahidin* during the war against the former Soviet Union. Others are alleged to have ties to Islamic extremist organisations in Indonesia and the Philippines". Malaysian police are quoted as estimating KMM strength at 70–80 members. *Patterns of Global Terrorism* only quotes press reporting tying KMM activity to extremism in Indonesia.

Turning to the Philippines, *Patterns of Global Terrorism* notes that some ASG members fought in Afghanistan against the Soviets. The only possible

reference to Al Qaeda is, "[ASG] may receive some support from Islamic extremists in the Middle East and South Asia".[11] *Patterns of Global Terrorism* seems to reflect the widely held view that the ASG's main motivation now is criminal, rather than ideological. Somewhat surprisingly, it makes no mention of the MILF, despite reporting from reputable sources over many years about the MILF's links with Al Qaeda.

The next in the series, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002* should be published in May 2003. It will probably contain information flowing from the Camp X-Ray and Bagram Air Force Base interrogations, and information that comes from other investigations that took place during Operation Enduring Freedom.

Time magazine has long been a favoured conduit for the US to selectively place intelligence in the public domain. A good example was the 23 September 2002 edition, which cover-storied Al Qaeda regional operative Omar Al-Faruq. The US obviously had ulterior motives for the publication of Faruq's story, probably to bring pressure to bear on the Indonesian Government, which prior to Bali was in denial about terrorism in Indonesia. Nevertheless, intelligence sources believe that the substance of what is reported in the article "Confessions of an Al-Qaeda Terrorist"[12] is accurate.

Faruq was arrested on 5 June 2002 in Indonesia and transported to Afghanistan for interrogation. On 9 September 2002, after three months of interrogation, Faruq admitted to being the Al Qaeda senior representative in Southeast Asia. Faruq said that he had been ordered to plan large-scale attacks against US interests in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Some of these were to take place on or near 11 September 2002.

Link-related claims in the article include:

- Al Qaeda received financial and operational assistance from JI.
- Abu Bakar Bashir authorised Faruq to use JI operatives and resources to conduct the planned September 2002 US embassy bombings.
- JI Malaysia hosted visiting Al Qaeda operative Moussaoui in September 2000.
- Faruq was the mastermind behind the Christmas 2000 bombings in Indonesia.
- Southeast Asia has the highest concentration of Al Qaeda operatives outside of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Islamic charity al Haramain is a source of funding for Al Qaeda, and significantly more so for regional extremist groups in Southeast Asia.

- Abu Bakar Bashir was eager to work with Al Qaeda and went out of his way to provide assistance to Faruq.
- Faruq helped Agus Dwikarna to establish Laskar Jundullah in Indonesia.
- Faruq engaged in training exercises with local extremist groups in Southeast Asia.

For an official Malaysian source, I will draw on a recent paper by Che Moin bin Umar, of the National Security Division, Prime Minister's Department.[13] He notes the influence on Malaysian Islamic extremists of the views of Sayyid Qutb and Hassan Al-Bana. The Malaysian extremist group Al-Maunah is not identified as having any external links.

He notes that the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) consists of two wings, the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (also referred to as KMM) and JI. He observes that:

> Besides espousing the idea of [an] Islamic state in Malaysia, KMM's main goal is to help other Muslims in the name of Muslim brotherhood and solidarity. The core members of KMM were involved in [the] Mujahiddin war in Afghanistan in [the] 1980s and 1990s, and later on in Maluku and Sulawesi in [the] late 1990s and 2000–2001.[14]

He goes on to say that:

> The group supports the Pan Islamic idea espoused by Osama bin Laden, which stresses the importance of *jihad* (holy war). Osama views *jihad* as an obligation for every individual Muslim. JI also agrees with Osama's *fatwa* (religious edict) that permit[s] Muslims to attack American interests.[15]

Che Moin further states:

> Security agencies in Southeast Asia concluded that JI operates as a regional/zonal grouping, which [sees] Malaysia-Indonesia-Southern Philippines-Southern Thailand as . . . its zonal group. JI is . . . well organised and has a clear chain of command. Abu Bakar [Bashir] as chief of the Southeast Asia group, and three of its key members — Mohd Iqbal, Hambali and Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana — forming [sic] a Regional Shura. While a certain key individual heads each [of the] cells in Malaysia, Singapore, Southern Philippines and Southern Thailand [sic]. JI Malaysia's chief is believed to be Dr. Wan Min Wan Mat.[16]

Che Moin notes that Abu Bakar Bashir and Hambali established the JI cells in Singapore and Indonesia. He estimates the number of JI members in Singapore at 80. (31 have been detained so far under the ISA.) He reports that

JI cells in Southeast Asian countries cooperated to mount operations. Malaysia has rounded-up 68 members of JI and KMM, including the leadership. Che Moin argues that while "KMM is largely a localised group though its members were involved in helping other Muslims abroad", however, JI on the other hand "is a more complex and well-organised movement, which operate[s] regionally".[17] Che Moin makes no specific mention of Al Qaeda or of links with Al Qaeda.

Finally, I will draw from the Singapore White Paper of 7 January 2003. I suggest that the reasons for producing the White Paper are: to inform the Singapore public and reduce any prospect of ethnic tensions, provide a Singapore Government "spin" on terrorism in the region, and underline to other governments, particularly the US and Singapore's ASEAN neighbours, that Singapore has been efficient in dealing with its internal security problem as soon as it became aware of it.

In terms of linkages, the White Paper makes the following points:

On JI:

- Abu Bakar Bashir and Abdullah Sungkar, who was also an Afghan war veteran, formed JI in 1985. Sungkar from the outset sent local JI members to train with Al Qaeda.
- Ibrahim Maidin, the first Singapore JI leader, established the Singapore cell after taking an oath of allegiance to Bashir, the JI amir.
- JI is one of several radical militant Islamic groups active in Southeast Asia. Many have close ties with Al Qaeda and work with Al Qaeda operatives and sleepers.
- JI shares the virulent anti-West ideology of global *jihad* purveyed by Al Qaeda, and its close links to Al Qaeda have made it a willing proxy to attack the US and other targets.
- In 1999/2000 the JI leadership stepped up recruitment and planned for more terrorist training in Afghanistan or Mindanao.

On Al Qaeda:

- Al Qaeda has used Southeast Asia as a safe haven, transit point and procurement site.
- In Indonesia Al Qaeda has links with two organisations, (the now-defunct) Laskar Jihad and the MMI.
- Through the brotherhood of Afghanistan/Al Qaeda alumni, Al Qaeda enjoys secure, reliable and easy access into Southeast Asia.

On regional groups:

- Links with Al Qaeda have made regional groups more radical and extreme as they have blended Al Qaeda's global agenda into their local agenda.
- Links between regional groups became closer as a result of Al Qaeda encouragement. For instance JI had its own training camp within the MILF's Camp Abu Bakar. GAM also trained there.
- In 1999, the JI regional leadership formed a secret caucus, the Rabitatul Mujahidin, to bring together regional militant Islamic leaders and ultimately achieve the pan-Southeast Islamic State or *Daulah Islamiyah.*
- A contentious assertion is that some of the local leaders were coopted into the Al Qaeda organisation even as they continued to hold their positions in their indigenous organisations. This does not fit with information held by other intelligence agencies.
- Key Indonesian JI figures such as Hambali and Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi, are also clearly linked to Al Qaeda members and activities in the region. Hambali is the regional linkman for Al Qaeda and enjoyed personal access to Mohamed Atef, the former Al Qaeda operations commander.

There is a lot more that analysts can draw from the very comprehensive Singapore White Paper.

Conclusions

I doubt that anyone would disagree about the closeness of the links, as described, that have existed, and continue to exist, between Al Qaeda and regional groups.

In terms of "closeness" though, a possible current "ranking" is:

- JI
- MILF
- Laskar Jihad
- Laskar Jundullah
- KMM
- Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI)
- GAM
- Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)

- ASG (some reports suggest that the ASG is no longer well regarded by Al Qaeda.)

There is insufficient information to rank the Thai organisations:

- Gerakan Mujahidin Islam Pattani (GMIP)
- New Pattani United Liberation Organization (New PULO)
- Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN)

The main assessment difference that exists between the intelligence community and some academics, it seems to me, is on the nature of the Al Qaeda relationship with regional groups. Intelligence analysts generally see Al Qaeda as maintaining a separate operational entity, which draws support from regional groups when needed for regional activities.

Al Qaeda will also co-opt suitable unaffiliated individuals, such as Ramzi Yousef and Richard Reid, to conduct activities on its behalf.

At the same time regional Islamic extremist organisations will mount their own operations, usually with a local agenda in mind, but these will often fit broadly into Al Qaeda's global agenda, and may be claimed by Al Qaeda as part of the grand plan of global *jihad*, as was heard with bin Laden's 11 November 2002 audiotape. The Bali bombing seems to be an example of the latter.

The Al Qaeda leadership seems to be quite xenophobic. The intelligence community view is that there are no non-Arabs in the Al Qaeda Shura, but that there are some foreign-born Arabs. There seems to be little doubt about the involvement of Abu Bakar Bashir with terrorism in Southeast Asia, at least up until the end of 2000, despite his protestations of innocence. Hambali is seen as the main JI operations linkman to Al Qaeda — but not as someone having any formal status within Al Qaeda.

Al Qaeda has also discriminated within its own membership between the poorly educated "foot soldiers" that it had in Afghanistan, and its more worldly middle class operatives, such as Mohammed Atta. Al Qaeda even divided the foot soldiers into Arabs and non-Arabs, although this might have had more to do with language difficulties than xenophobia.

Al Qaeda operatives will act as trainers with regional groups but, with the possible exception of some of those with the groups in Pakistan, they are not seemingly "badged" as members of both. This situation may have changed with the post-Enduring Freedom dispersal of Al Qaeda operatives and trainers from Afghanistan, but I have yet to see convincing evidence of such a change having taken place in Southeast Asia.

In my view, the US invasion and occupation of Iraq will create a dangerous situation for the US and its allies. The war against Iraq was transparently not about terrorism. Not only will the war be exploited by Al Qaeda and Muslim extremists everywhere to polarise Muslims and non-Muslims, but it will be used to justify further major acts of terrorism.

Notes

1. This essay was prepared in December 2002.
2. Australia, Canada, the UK and US.
3. AUSCANUKUS security classifications are: Restricted, Confidential, Secret, and Top Secret but there are additional caveats relating to source and "releasability".
4. Available at <www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/11/12/1037080730619.html>.
5. See US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001* (Washington, DC: US State Department, May 2002).
6. Singapore Government White Paper, *The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism* (Singapore: Ministry of Home Affairs, Republic of Singapore, 7 January 2003).
7. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) *Four Corners* television interview with Professor Zachary Abuza, 8 October 2002.
8. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001.*
9. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 122.
10. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 123.
11. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 88.
12. See, *Time*, 23 September 2002, pp. 28–35.
13. Mr. Che Moin bin Umar, National Security Division, Prime Minister's Department "Terrorism in Asia-Pacific — Malaysian Experience," December 2002.
14. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 7.
15. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 7.
16. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, pp. 10–11.
17. US State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2001*, p. 7.

Chapter 4

The Indigenous Roots of Conflict in Southeast Asia: The Case of Mindanao

Andrew Tan

Introduction: Southeast Asia and the War Against Terrorism

Since the seminal events of 11 September 2001, when radical Muslim terrorists succeeded in killing almost 3,000 people in dramatic attacks in New York and Washington, attention has been increasingly focused on Southeast Asia as the "second front" in the war against terrorism. The uncovering of a major Al Qaeda-linked terrorist bomb plot in Singapore in December 2001 and the deadly Bali bomb attack on 12 October 2002 seemed to confirm fears that the region is becoming a hotbed for radical Muslim terrorists. In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, it is feared that the region's large Muslim population and the many thousands of islands in the Indonesian and Philippine archipelago would become hiding places for Al Qaeda remnants and operatives fleeing from Afghanistan. It has also been known that Osama bin Laden has focused attention on the region, having made efforts in the last decade to spread Al Qaeda's influence and to develop its network in Southeast Asia. This region is especially important to Al Qaeda, as success amongst the world's largest Muslim population would ensure an endless supply of jihadists and boost his

revolutionary objective of a pan-Islamic community. The post-Suharto crisis of governance in Indonesia and the presence of fundamental grievances in places such as Mindanao in the Philippines seem to suggest that the region is ripe for Muslim revolution.

In the Philippines, Al Qaeda has provided training, funding and ideological indoctrination for the main separatist rebel groups, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group. After 11 September 2001, these links have been held to constitute part of the Al Qaeda global radical Muslim network.[1] The Abu Sayyaf has now been proscribed as a terrorist group due to its close Al Qaeda links, with US troops currently in the southern Philippines to participate in the war against terrorism by training Philippine troops to better deal with the Abu Sayyaf. The US has for the time being avoided listing the MILF as a terrorist group despite its documented links with Al Qaeda. The MILF, on its part, has publicly distanced itself from Al Qaeda since 11 September 2001, adhering to a ceasefire and has seemed amenable for the time being to engage in negotiations with the central government.

This essay contends that it is important to understand the complex nature of Muslim armed rebellion in Southeast Asia if headway is to be made in the war against terrorism. While the events of 11 September 2001 have focused attention on Southeast Asian Muslim rebels and their links with international terrorism, especially Al Qaeda, it is important to remember that the armed Muslim separatist rebellions in the region long predated those seminal events. The Moro rebellion has long historical antecedents emanating from historical, political, economic and social causes. While various Moro rebel groups have accepted foreign assistance, the Moro struggle is principally a nationalist and territorial one, although religion has served as a rallying call and focal point of resistance to the central government. The complex nature of the Moro rebellion and the presence of fundamental grievances point to the conclusion that in joining up the dots to uncover the Al Qaeda network in the region, it is important to bear in mind the fact that not every Muslim rebel in the region is a dedicated Al Qaeda operative.

The Moro Rebellion: Antecedents and the MNLF's Emergence

The Moro rebellion in the Philippines has been the largest and most persistent of the armed separatist movements in the region since 1975. The roots of the conflict go well back into colonial history when the Spaniards,

who arrived in 1565, halted the Islamisation of the Philippine islands. They defeated the Moros in the north and continually attacked the Moro sultanates in Mindanao and the Sulu islands in the south for the next 350 years. Despite these attempts, the Spaniards were never able to completely subdue the Moros due to the strength of their resistence. The Moros subsequently disputed the handover of all the Philippine islands, including Moro lands in the south, to the United States in 1898 following the Spanish-American War of that year. Anti-American resistance was crushed in a brutal campaign of pacification. After that, the situation was aggravated by a massive influx of Catholic settlers from the north.[2]

By the 1960s, the Moros had become a minority in many parts of their traditional homeland, with many losing their land to the immigrant settlers through dubious legal transactions or outright confiscation. Catholics outnumber Muslims in most provinces in the south today. The problem of growing Moro landlessness was compounded by the settlement of many surrendered communist Huk rebels who were given land in the south. Added to landlessness and discrimination, much poverty and unemployment also exists among Muslim Moros, contributing to a very deep sense of alienation. Many Moros began to resort to violence. Indeed, violent confrontations between Muslims and Catholics became so serious that President Marcos imposed martial law in 1972.[3]

The very real grievances of the Moros were reinforced by a growing sense of Muslim identity associated with the worldwide Islamic resurgence. New mosques were built and contacts with Islamic organisations in the Middle East, Indonesia and Malaysia were established. In 1969, the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM) was created and it vowed to establish an independent state in Mindanao and the Sulu and Palawan islands.[4] At about the same time, other radical Muslim organisations, the Union of Islamic Forces and Organisations (UIFO) and the Ansar El Islam, were also established. Overseas sympathisers in the Middle East, notably Libya, established an Islamic Directorate of the Philippines to coordinate overseas assistance. The goal of the Moros is independence; this was clearly stated in the MIM constitution, which said that "the policy of isolation and dispersal of the Muslim community by the government . . . has been detrimental to the Muslims and Islam" and that "Islam being a communal religion and ideology, and at the same time a way of life, must have a definite territory of its own for the exercise of its tenets and teaching, and for the observance of its *shariah* and adat laws".[5]

Specifically, the MIM cited the following reasons for agitating for secession: the establishment of provincial and municipal governments undermined the

status of traditional leaders; the imposition of a new legal system negated the judicial functions of the village elders, causing a breakdown of social order; the public school system caused dislocation and alienation by forcing children to learn a new set of values which negated their traditional cultural values; and, the influx of settlers and "landgrabbers" into Muslim provinces undermined the economic base of the Moros.[6]

In 1969, a group of Muslims from the MIM and the UIFO began military training in camps in the Malaysian state of Sabah, where they received the support of its then chief minister, Tun Mustapha, with the tacit agreement of the Malaysian government.[7] Another group also apparently trained in Malaysia in areas close to the Thai border.[8] A reason for the Malaysian government's support was its desire to retaliate against Marcos's sponsorship in 1968 of military training in Corregidor for an intended separatist rebellion in Sabah, which is claimed by the Philippines. This operation had fallen apart and became public knowledge when the trainees mutinied and were subsequently executed, an event known as the Jabidah massacre, which outraged the Moro community at the time.[9]

The Malaysian trainees returned and went on to organise and lead separatist guerrilla armies. One of them, Nur Misuari, a former student at the University of the Philippines, founded the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1972. Misuari was able to capitalise on popular Moro resentment over the influx of Catholic settlers and the general economic poverty in the south. The MIM was dissolved in its favour, and the MNLF also succeeded in obtaining the support of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), the Organisation of Islamic Conferences (OIC) and Libya.[10] Large numbers of Muslims joined the MNLF as it launched a *jihad* against the central government.

The MNLF's military arm, the Bangsa Moro Army, conducted a bitter guerrilla campaign against the Philippine armed forces. Over 100,000 deaths occurred in a huge civil war, with over 500,000 fleeing as refugees.[11] The scale of fighting was such that the Philippine government felt compelled to negotiate a settlement. The result was the 1976 Tripoli Agreement, which was brokered by the OIC. Misuari compromised by accepting autonomy for 13 of Mindanao's 21 provinces, rather than outright independence. However, mutual recriminations saw the agreement break down almost as soon as it was signed, and the conflict resumed.[12] Tragically, it took years of further fighting before a truncated version of the Tripoli Agreement came into effect in 1996.

A split within the MNLF saw the setting up of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF). The MNLF saw a number of setbacks, with top leaders

defecting either to cooperate with the government or to join the MILF. In 1982, another split occurred when another MNLF leader established the MNLF Reformist Group (MNLF-RG) with its headquarters in Malaysia.

The MILF has been critical of the leftist orientation of the MNLF, and has sought to emphasise its Islamic credentials and identity. Its eventual objective is an independent Muslim Moro state. Led by Hashim Selamat, a religious leader trained at Cairo's al-Azhar University, the MILF, by the 1990s had become the main Moro rebel movement. It is well organised and has several imams or Muslim religious leaders as members. Its armed wing, the Bangsa-Moro Islamic Armed Forces (BIAF), grew tremendously, eclipsing the MNLF.[13]

The BIAF is also militarily proficient, led by officers trained by ex-British Special Forces in Sabah in the 1960s, and bolstered by periodic large shipments of arms such as Russian-made RPG-2 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mortars and machine guns, and allegedly US-made Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, that were originally supplied to the Afghan mujahidin in their war of resistance against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. Many members of the BIAF also gained combat experience in Afghanistan as volunteers fighting alongside the anti-Soviet mujahidin resistance forces.[14] While the MNLF is confined to isolated Sulu and draws its support from the Tausug ethnic group there, the MILF has the support of 1.6 million Maguindanaos who live on the larger island of Mindanao, as well as the largest Muslim ethnic group, the 1.9 million Maranaos.[15]

The MILF has clashed with government forces in many incidents since 1986. However, most of the confrontations have been small-scale clashes. The government concentrated on negotiations with the more amenable MNLF, the most internationally visible group, leaving the MILF, which will not compromise on an independent Muslim Moro state, alone. The MILF wisely avoided major clashes with the government, and has thus been able to concentrate on building up its strength throughout the 1980s and the early 1990s. Today, the MILF claims to be able to field 120,000 mujahidin in four fully armed divisions, a force numerically superior to the entire Philippine armed forces but one which top Philippine commanders conceded was possible.[16] Some Western military intelligence estimates put its standing army at up to 35,000, while others believe it actually has about 18,000, which is still a formidable force.[17]

An effort on this scale stems from the MILF's ability to obtain funds from sympathetic Islamic organisations abroad, in Malaysia, Pakistan and the Middle East, and the fact that it has the support of Moro religious leaders. The MILF today is in control of large swathes of at least seven provinces in

Mindanao, with the present Philippine government unwilling or powerless to challenge the movement. In fact, local officials have little choice but to actively cooperate with it, given its control on the ground. The MILF has its own 80-strong Consultative Assembly and draws popular support from Muslims throughout Mindanao. In short, the MILF acts as a de facto government overseeing large areas of territory in Mindanao.

In contrast, the MNLF is more secular in orientation and more willing to compromise. The overthrow of Marcos in 1986 brought to power Corazon Aquino, who was prepared to grant a measure of autonomy to Mindanao. The MILF refused to participate in negotiations, and the central government proceeded to negotiate only with Misuari's MNLF. Misuari was prepared to give up his demands for a separate state, but there were practical difficulties in defining what autonomy meant, as Muslims were now a majority in only five of the 23 provinces of Mindanao and Sulu. Moreover, the Philippine military opposed the peace negotiations. The MILF also launched attacks on the government and even attacked MNLF units in a bid to scuttle the negotiations.

In any event, Misuari broke off talks in mid-1987 after accusing the armed forces of violating the ceasefire agreement. It was also clear to him that Aquino was not prepared to fully implement the Tripoli Agreement. Nevertheless, Aquino proceeded to establish the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao in 1990, which is too limited in scope for the MILF rebels to accept, as it covers only four provinces and the city of Marani, where the Muslims are in a majority.[18]

Misuari and the MNLF, however, proved amenable to negotiations. In October–November 1993, with the assistance of the Indonesian government and the OIC, the central Philippine government met with MNLF representatives and signed an agreement to establish an autonomous region in Mindanao, as well as a ceasefire agreement. Several committees were set up to resolve the issues relating to autonomy. In a significant gesture, Indonesian president Suharto congratulated the participants and expressed his hope that the process would continue until a comprehensive peace settlement was reached.[19] However, the main obstacle had been the insistence of the government that it was bound by the constitution to organise a referendum on autonomy, something which the MNLF was opposed to since Catholics outnumber Muslims in most of these provinces.[20] The impasse weakened the MNLF, which suffered defections and the loss of a substantial support base to the MILF and the smaller Abu Sayyaf Group. Its military position also weakened following the surrender of a number of its military commands

in response to the Philippine government's reconciliation efforts. In March 1993, for instance, as many as 500 MNLF rebels surrendered, citing their trust in President Ramos' programmes.[21]

The OIC and the Indonesian government proved to be important moderating influences, and their consistent support for the MNLF led to its international prominence.[22] But this also resulted in the MNLF being amenable to negotiations despite the fact that what was at issue was autonomy and not outright independence. Another consideration was the spoils of office which was being offered. On its part, the Philippine government welcomed the intervention and involvement of the OIC and the Indonesian government, recognising their vital moderating role and also the reality that it could not defeat the rebels on the battlefield. In December 1993, the OIC secretary-general visited Manila to discuss the outcome of the talks and he took the opportunity to commend President Ramos' "sincere desire" to resolve the issue in a "just and lasting way". In a pointed snub to the Islamic-oriented MILF, he commended the efforts for peace made by "the sole legitimate representative of the Muslims of the southern Philippines, Nur Misuari".[23]

However, a measure of the failure of Misuari to command popular support or even full support within his own ranks was reflected in the military attacks waged by renegade MNLF commands, which refused to accept the ceasefire agreement or the negotiations, launching a wave of bombings in southern cities in 1993 and 1994.[24]

Misuari's willingness to compromise was thus encouraged as much by the decline in MNLF strength as by the Islamic international community's moderating influence. The MILF took advantage of the ceasefire to build up its own strength, to the point that by the mid-1990s, it became the dominant Moro rebel group, replacing the MNLF. The Philippine government tacitly acknowledged the strategic reality by refraining from challenging the MILF on the ground, with local authorities making their own arrangements with MILF officials and commanders. Thus, concurrent with the growing strength of the extremist Abu Sayyaf Group and the MILF in the 1990s, moderates such as Misuari became increasingly sidelined by the strategic realities on the ground.

Realising this, Misuari finally signed a peace agreement in August 1996, in which the MNLF would establish a council to oversee development projects in Mindanao, with a Muslim autonomous region to be established after a referendum in 1999. The MILF, however, denounced the agreement and declared that it was taking over the revolutionary movement.[25] MILF chairman Hashim Selamat stated that "the Ramos-Misuari agreement does not

address the Mindanao Muslims' demand for self-rule. It is an outright violation of the Tripoli agreement".[26] To underline their aspirations, some 60,000 Muslims gathered in the southern town of Sultan Kudarat and issued a call for an independent Islamic state.[27] The majority Christians also refused to accept the agreement, mounting a number of public demonstrations against it to show their opposition to any concession to Muslims.[28] The Christians were backed by at least 34 armed extremist vigilante and militia groups which have vowed to violently resist any attempt by the Philippine Government to disarm the Christian community in Mindanao.[29]

The MILF Joins the Peace Process

After years of refusing to join the negotiating table despite overtures from the government, the MILF finally met with Philippine government representatives in January 1997 and agreed to begin formal peace talks. However, the MILF set a tough agenda, stating that the peace talks would discuss the "Bangsamoro problem", that is, an independent Muslim state.[30] After tough negotiations, all that was achieved was a tenuous ceasefire which officials hoped would create a more conducive atmosphere for talks on a possible final peace agreement.[31]

However, a large number of clashes in 1997 resulted in 44,000 refugees and an unspecified death toll, with the Philippine military continuing to deploy four of its six army divisions in Mindanao.[32] In January 1999, full-scale fighting erupted after President Estrada declared that "if they want war, we will give them war".[33] The Philippine armed forces launched a major offensive on 26 January, prompting the MILF to declare that "we will meet force with equal force".[34] Underlying the outbreak of hostilities was the perceptible failure of Nur Misuari to bring about any development to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, enabling the MILF to exploit pent-up frustrations and recruit even more members into its ranks. Indeed, Moro landlessness has been compounded by continuing poverty and unemployment, which was not helped by the corruption of the local bureaucracy, discrimination against Muslims and the lack of regional development. Both sides hardened their stance, with the MILF insisting on an independent Muslim state, and President Estrada stating his view in graphic terms — "over my dead body".[35]

Despite the fighting, mediation by the OIC and the Muslim World League resulted in formal peace negotiations commencing in October 1999. Encouraged by East Timor's independence in 1999, the MILF demanded an independent Islamic state. Maintaining a hardline stance, the MILF declared that "the same demand will be aired, 20 years or even 100 years from now

because the Bangsamoro people believe that independence is the ultimate solution to the Mindanao problem".[36] In response, President Estrada rejected the call for independence, saying that "we must keep in mind that we have only one sovereign republic, one sovereign territory and one armed forces".[37] In January 2000, he announced that if the MILF failed to conclude peace talks with the government by June, the armed forces would launch all out war.[38] However, the main stumbling block to a negotiated settlement was not merely the central government's opposition to an independent Moro state, but the fact that Catholics outnumber Muslims in most provinces in Mindanao. The Catholics, who are armed and have military-supported militias to defend themselves, are not likely to acquiesce to this and would most certainly resort to violence to oppose such an eventuality.

Indeed, a number of vigilante groups with the avowed aim of combating the Muslim separatists have sprung up in the south. For instance, the Black Crescent militia group was established in early 2000 in response to the continuing violence. The group is presently organising Christians in the south and arming them to fight the Muslim separatists. The Black Crescent is however only the latest of a number of such groups which can be found today in Basilan, North Cotabato and other areas where Muslim separatists operate. These groups have also played their part in increasing the level of violence in the southern provinces. For instance, the Christian vigilante group, the Sagrados Corazon (Sacred Heart), has been responsible for a number of revenge killings against Muslims.[39]

In spite of the ongoing peace talks between the MILF and the government which began in 1997, armed clashes continued. In November 1999, clashes left a number dead on both sides, with 20,000 people fleeing the fighting. Predictably, each side blamed the other for insincerity and for affecting the peace talks.[40]

In late November 1999, new Indonesian president Gus Dur entered the picture by suggesting a meeting with the MILF during his state visit to the Philippines. The meeting eventually failed to materialise following opposition from the Philippine government, but it was unlikely that Gus Dur would have encouraged the MILF to secede, given a similar problem in Aceh in Indonesia.

In February 2000, peace talks with the MILF collapsed amidst fighting in North Cotabato.[41] The MILF may have concluded that it could use force to press for more concessions given the then perception of a weakened Philippine president, given that Estrada found himself embroiled in various domestic controversies.[42] The armed forces on the other hand, retaliated by conducting

a massive attack on a major MILF base, killing over 300 guerrillas in the process.[43] In response, the MILF launched a series of bombing attacks on buses, a radio station and a ferry, causing a number of civilian deaths and injuries. The fighting created a fresh refugee crisis involving some 18,000 people who fled to Marawi City.[44]

When Arroyo took over as President, however, she managed to entice the MILF back to the negotiation table. Stepping back from the brink, the MILF agreed in mid-2001 to a ceasefire and negotiations with the central government.[45]

In recent times, rising concern over the activities of Al Qaeda in the region have led to investigations over the MILF's links with international terrorism. These links have come to prominence in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. It is a well-known fact that Osama bin Laden provided funding and training to the MILF. Funds were channeled through his brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, who lived in Manila in the 1990s, where he ran a Muslim charity.[46] There is also evidence that MILF chairman Hashim Selamat was in regular contact with the top Al Qaeda leadership. At the military level, Al Qaeda also imparted specialised training to MILF and other Southeast Asian Islamists at the MILF-run Camp Abu Bakar in Mindanao.[47] The MILF itself declared in early 2000 that ten Saudi "military consultants" had arrived to help its cause.[48] After the training camp was overrun by the Philippine armed forces, Al Qaeda relocated it to Poso, Sulawesi, in Indonesia.

But the events of 11 September 2001, rather than galvanising the MILF into revolutionary fervour, actually provided a boost to the peace process as the MILF leadership beat a hasty retreat from its links with Al Qaeda.[49] In March 2002, the MILF described as "unfair, inaccurate, unfounded" reports linking the MILF with terrorism, and insisted that it is in fact a "legitimate liberation organisation", stressing its participation in negotiations "for a peaceful settlement of the Bangsamoro problem". Significantly, the MILF stated that it "counts on committed popular memberships who are not fanatical about their religion", and declared that it would be contrary to the MILF's declared goal and objectives to link up with "terrorism or any extremist groups using religious faith as a tool for terroristic activities".[50] In April 2002, the MILF agreed to the joint training with the Philippine government of local ceasefire monitoring teams.[51] In June 2002, the MILF offered to fight "hand in hand" with the Philippine military to end the Abu Sayyaf problem.[52]

This new-found realism on the part of the MILF did not go un-noticed. Indeed, the government's chief negotiator for peace talks with the MILF, Jesus Dureza, paid the group the ultimate compliment when he stated in October

2002 that he found the MILF friendlier than the government in building a climate of peace and development in Mindanao, citing as an example military officials who seemed intent on continuing with the use of force to resolve the Moro problem.[53] At about the same time, the MILF also publicly reiterated its denial that it had ever forged tactical alliances with the Jemaah Islamiyah or JI (blamed for the deadly Bali terrorist attack on 12 October 2002), the extremist Abu Sayyaf and Al Qaeda. It also declared that it would now stop allowing foreign Muslim missionaries into their camps, "since the Philippines and US government have tagged these missionaries as terrorists".[54]

Yet, despite these protestations, there is evidence that some MILF factions have continued to maintain links with the Al Qaeda-linked JI which carried out the deadly 12 October 2002 Bali attack, even to the extent of carrying out operations for it as well as providing refuge and training for JI operatives on the run from authorities in the region.[55] In August 2003, however, the death from natural causes of Hashim Selamat was announced. Significantly, Hashim, who subscribed to a more pan-Islamic agenda and who had close documented links with Osama, issued a deathbed testament renouncing terrorism. His replacement, as MILF leader, is the military commander, Murad Ebrahim, who is widely considered a more nationalist-oriented leader.[56] His close personal links with Malaysia also suggest that he would be more open to Malaysia's moderating influence with regard to pan-Islamism and the JI.

It is thus clear that while some MILF factions have been caught up with radical Islamic ideology due to Al Qaeda indoctrination and the spread of pan-Islamic radicalism, other MILF factions and leaders are aware that the movement's *raison d'etre* is to redress the fundamental grievances that underlie Moro rebellion and that ultimately, its objectives are nationalistic and territorial. With Hashim's death, these more nationalist-oriented elements are likely to move to the fore.

The Fly in the Ointment: The Abu Sayyaf Group

The peace process, however, has been hampered by the activities of the extremist Islamic movement, the Abu Sayyaf (literally "sword bearer") Group. Founded by Amilhussin Jumaani and Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani in 1991, this armed terrorist group is opposed to any religious accommodation with the Christians and believes that violent action is the only solution. The Abu Sayyaf has been able to attract the support of a number of ex-MNLF supporters disillusioned with Misuari's leadership, particularly his willingness to negotiate with the government.[57] With its expertise and willingness to carry

out urban terrorism, and its uncompromising stand, the Abu Sayyaf is considered the more violent and dangerous group despite the fact that it is far smaller in size than the MILF.

More seriously, the Abu Sayyaf appears to be an expression of the rise of pan-Islamic militant violence worldwide, and indeed appears to have strong connections with international Muslim terrorist groups, particularly with Al Qaeda. Its founder, Janjalani, was himself a veteran of the Afghan conflict, and had brought back with him enthusiastic fellow veterans fired up by pan-Islamic militant ideology. In fact, the name Abu Sayyaf is a tribute to Osama bin Laden's ally Rasool Sayyaf, with whom he fought during the Afghan War.[58] Bin Laden himself sent the Pakistani terrorist Ramzi Yousef to train the Abu Sayyaf in the use of sophisticated high explosives. Yousef had achieved infamy with daring terrorist acts, such as his bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York in 1993. Bin Laden also helped to bankroll the activities of the group, while his brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa (who married a Filipina) also provided assistance in its founding.[59] With training and money provided by Al Qaeda, and through the use of extortion and kidnapping for ransom, the Abu Sayyaf was thus able to wreak havoc in the southern Philippines.[60]

A wave of violence broke out in 1993, with the Abu Sayyaf targeting Catholic civilians in a number of atrocities.[61] Although it is estimated to have only a few hundred core members and unlike the MILF does not control territory or a regular army, it is well led by Muslim veterans of the Afghanistan conflict. In addition, it has proven skilful in waging urban terrorism. The group, which operates in Sulu Island and Basilan, suffered a setback when government troops attacked and captured its largest camp on Basilan in June 1994, killing 41 guerrillas in the fighting.[62] The Philippines armed forces claimed in August the same year that the group had been "completely annihilated".[63] However, on 4 April 1995, 200 guerrillas of the Abu Sayyaf arrived in the Christian town of Ipil and killed 57 people, setting the town centre on fire. The guerrillas took hostages and retreated when government troops arrived. The attack also exposed the government's military ineptitude: after four battles, the pursuing and numerically superior government forces had failed to defeat the retreating rebels.[64] The attack came at an awkward time for President Ramos, with congressional and local elections to be held in May 1995, undermining Ramos' claim that the internal security situation was under control.

It was the daring raid on the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan Island in April 2000 that the Abu Sayyaf gained worldwide notoriety. The Abu

Sayyaf kidnapped 21 hostages, including twelve Western tourists.[65] At one bold stroke, the Abu Sayyaf was able to put the separatist agenda before a worldwide audience in an attempt to internationalise the issue. It demanded a separate Islamic state in the southern Philippines and a probe into alleged maltreatment of Filipinos in Sabah as conditions for the release of the hostages.[66] The Abu Sayyaf also gained from its higher profile since embarking on a policy of kidnappings. Not only did it obtain large sums of ransom cash, it also attracted a large number of new recruits, lured by the success of the group.[67]

Demonstrating its empathy with the Al Qaeda cause, the Abu Sayyaf also demanded that the United States government release three Islamic militants jailed for terrorist activities in the West. They included Ramzi Yousef and Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, a Muslim cleric jailed for plotting to bomb various targets in New York. The Abu Sayyaf stated that American citizens would be targeted if these demands were not met.[68]

The Sipadan kidnappings inevitably drew the Malaysian government into the fray. The Malaysian government pledged to do its best to obtain the release of the hostages but in doing so, incurred the displeasure of the Philippine government, which was anxious to prevent any internationalisation of the Moro issue. In late May 2000, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir was forced to reject accusations that the Malaysian government was acting unilaterally when its ambassador met secretly with the Abu Sayyaf to discuss the hostage issue, claiming that whatever action Malaysia took had the consent of the Philippine government.[69]

In response to the growing anarchy in the southern Philippines, Malaysia's Defence Minister Najib Abdul Razak suggested in September that the Philippine government should talk to moderate Muslim leaders instead of relying on military force to resolve the conflict. Najib argued for a "comprehensive approach" in addressing security issues in the south, taking into account political, economic and military elements to resolve the conflict.[70] Najib's intervention was predictably not well-received but his point that a military solution would not be feasible was demonstrated by the fact that despite its best efforts, the Philippine armed forces could not apprehend the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers in the Sipadan incident, who apparently managed to bribe themselves out of the military cordon.[71]

Apart from kidnappings, urban terrorism has began to seriously affect the capital Manila, with a number of bomb attacks in May 2000 on shopping centres, the airport and a cinema, causing widespread apprehension on the part of the city's ten million inhabitants.[72] The Philippine Embassy in Jakarta was

also the target of a bomb attack on 1 August 2000 aimed at the ambassador, who was injured.[73] Apart from Manila, cities in the southern Philippines also suffered a number of terrorist bombing attacks throughout 2000, a trend which has continued to this day.[74]

While the Abu Sayyaf is said to be degenerating into a criminal organisation because of its kidnapping operations, a tactic denounced by the MILF as unIslamic, its urban bombing campaigns have continued apace. Philippine intelligence allege that the links with Al Qaeda have been maintained, and in October 2001, there emerged fears that Abu Sayyaf might attempt to poison the Manila water supply, resulting in heightened alert at water supply plants.[75]

Conclusion: Complexities of the Moro Problem

It has been increasingly recognised that what is feeding the rebellion in the south is not just religion but also extreme poverty and unemployment. On 27 February 2000, President Estrada therefore launched a major 24 billion pesos programme in Mindanao to address the region's socio-economic problems that have fed the insurgency. Funded by the World Bank and the European Union, the programme called for the construction of roads, irrigation systems and other infrastructure projects linking Mindanao's 24 provinces, as well as livelihood projects aimed at helping MNLF fighters who have abided by the peace accord signed in 1996. A separate United States Agency for International Development programme was also launched, aimed at improving the efficiency of agriculture. This consisted of post-harvest facilities, credit and financing, production support services and research and development.[76] Yet, all these appeared too little as well as too late, as the conditions for the development projects to proceed were simply not present given the fighting which ensued in the months after these initiatives were launched.

The Philippine Government under President Arroyo has taken a hard military line and has welcomed substantial military assistance from the US in combating the Moro rebellions in the southern provinces. These include transport aircraft, helicopters, patrol craft, armoured personnel carriers, assault rifles and anti-terrorism training worth an initial US$100 million. In return, the Philippines is likely to ratify a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement with the United States.[77] In January 2002, 650 US troops, including Special Forces, arrived to assist the Philippine Armed Forces against the Abu Sayyaf. While they are there officially to train Philippine troops in anti-terrorist tactics and

intelligence gathering techniques to be used against the Abu Sayyaf, there remains the possibility that US forces could get directly involved in military action.[78] The Philippine government itself has promulgated a Fourteen Point Plan to combat terrorism, but this plan, in the main, emphasises military measures. Fundamental grievances, such as Moro landlessness, poverty, unemployment, widespread discrimination and Catholic militia abuses remain unaddressed.

The US on its part has acted pragmatically in leaving the much larger MILF out of its list of terrorist groups, preferring to target the Abu Sayyaf. The MILF, with up to 35,000 combatants and strong popular support, cannot be neutralised without a major war and the commitment of many US army divisions. There is thus every incentive to encourage the ongoing peace talks between the MILF and the Philippine government. On its part, the MILF has maintained the current ceasefire and distanced itself from Al Qaeda and the Abu Sayyaf. Regional governments are also reluctant to target the MILF in recognition of its nationalist objectives and its on-going negotiations with the Philippine government. For instance, despite netting several MILF supporters in the arrests of Al Qaeda-linked terrorists involved in plots to bomb Singapore in late 2001, the Singapore government subsequently had them released. In Malaysia, the MILF cause is seen as legitimate in Muslim circles, and there remain much sympathy for the Moros. While there is ample evidence of pan-Islamic radicalism having penetrated its ranks, the death of Hashim Selamat and his replacement by the nationalist-oriented Murad Ebrahim means that the likely trajectory of the MILF is towards realising its nationalist goals. This does not mean, however, that the MILF is about to compromise on its objectives but the political nature of its demands leaves open the possibility of a political compromise being eventually reached.

This essay has attempted to show that the Moro problem demonstrates all the classic characteristics of a protracted civil conflict revolving around questions of identity and territory. Whilst the MNLF launched its struggle for independence in the late 1960s, after more than three decades of fighting, the Moro problem has remained intractable, although the seminal events of 11 September 2001 appears to have given the peace process in Mindanao a boost, given the MILF's apparent re-evaluation of its stand. However, even if the MILF leadership does eventually reach a compromise agreement with the Philippine government, there will be extremists on both sides who will sabotage such an agreement, as has been the case for the Davao peace accord of 1996. Moros who have been caught up in Al Qaeda's radical pan-Islamism

are likely to continue the fight, either by defecting to the Abu Sayyaf, or with Al Qaeda assistance, form their own extremist groups and cells.

The Moro problem is clearly a complex one, with long historical antecedents emanating from historical, political, economic and social causes. Such complexities need to be understood if headway is to be made in the war against terrorism following the events of 11 September 2001, and if a viable multi-faceted counter-terrorist strategy that takes into account these complexities could be formulated. While those seminal events have focused attention on Southeast Asian Muslim rebels and their links with international terrorism, especially Al Qaeda, it is also important to remember that armed Muslim separatist rebellions in the region, such as that in Mindanao, long predated 11 September 2001. While various Moro rebel groups have accepted foreign assistance, including from Al Qaeda, the main standard bearer of Moro aspirations, the MILF, has emphasised that its struggle is principally a nationalist and territorial one, although religion has certainly served as a rallying call and focal point of resistance to the central government. In joining up the dots to uncover the Al Qaeda network in the region, it is important to bear in mind that given the complex nature of the Moro rebellion and the presence of fundamental grievances, not every Muslim rebel in the region is a dedicated Al Qaeda operative.

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Chapter 5

Understanding Al Qaeda and its Network in Southeast Asia[1]

Rohan Gunaratna

Al Qaeda Al Sulbah — now renamed Al Qaeda Al Jihad — is the first multinational terrorist group of the twenty-first century. While past and present terrorist groups recruited from one single nationality and limited its campaign to a recover one single territory,[2] Al Qaeda is waging a global *jihad* with the United States and its allies and friends as its primary enemy.[3] Through its umbrella organisation — the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders, Al Qaeda is waging multiple campaigns both against the West and Muslim regimes friendly to the West. Prior to US intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001, Al Qaeda enjoyed a core force of 3,000–4,000 members[4] and linkages with two-dozen Islamist groups worldwide such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Southeast Asia, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) in Central Asia, and the Salafist Group for Call and Combat in North Africa (GSPC).[5]

While based in Pakistan (1988–1991), Sudan (1991–1996) and in Afghanistan (1996–2001), Al Qaeda was able to build a state-of-the-art global network for moving funds, goods, and personnel to attack its targets. Driven by the ideal of a universal *jihad*, Al Qaeda has been able to radicalise and mobilise all over the world. As a group with a global reach, having a multi-dimensional character, and possessing a multinational composition, Al Qaeda presents a new kind of threat, hitherto unimagined by counter terrorism

practitioners and security and intelligence professionals alike. For instance, Al Qaeda's operational style forbade subscription to a universal code. The code words, generally established by the individual cells, were periodically changed. For example, some code words used in Asia were: Market = Malaysia; Soup = Singapore; Terminal = Indonesia; Hotel = Philippines; Book = Passport; and American = White Meat.[6]

Al Qaeda tactics and targeting reflect its sophistication as a terrorist group. After the East Africa bombing — a land suicide attack on a US diplomatic target — the US security community strengthened the security of all US missions overseas. However, instead of another land suicide operation, Al Qaeda mounted a sea-borne suicide operation. After Al Qaeda attacked USS Cole in October 2000, the US security community invested in preventing another land or maritime attack by strengthening its perimeter security. However, Al Qaeda evaded security measures and struck America's most outstanding landmark on 9/11. Thereafter, Al Qaeda planned to strike the US once more with a radiological dispersal device using Jose Padilla, an American Muslim, an operation that was disrupted at the reconnaissance stage in mid-2002.

In the world of terrorism, Al Qaeda has set new standards. With Al Qaeda increasing the threshold for attacks from hundreds to thousands, some existing and emerging groups will seek to match it or even excel it by conducting mass casualty attacks using both conventional and unconventional means. As an Islamist group, the responsibility of the members is only to *Allah*, and as such the group engages in long-term planning and preparation and regard human and material losses as temporary setbacks. In keeping with Al Qaeda's "loosing and learning" doctrine, if it succeeds in rebuilding its capability and the target it failed to acquire is once again vulnerable, the group is likely to attack the target again.[7] As Al Qaeda has also effectively demonstrated, current and future terrorist groups are likely to use civilian infrastructure — from airplanes to commercially available fertiliser or chemicals to attack infrastructure and human targets.

When the Palestinian Jordanian Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Azzam and his Saudi protégé deputy Osama bin Laden founded the Maktab al Khidamat lil Mujahidin al Arab (MAK: Afghan Service Bureau) in 1984 and Al Qaeda in 1988[8] they set these organisations very lofty goals. While MAK aimed to defeat both the Soviet military, the largest land army in the world, and communism as an ideology, Al Qaeda sought to destroy the US and defeat capitalism as an ideology. In its founding charter, Al Qaeda was designated to play the role of a "pioneering vanguard" or to be the "spearhead" of Islamist movements.[9] Because of its obligation to inspire, instigate and show the way

to other groups and the community, Al Qaeda's preference is to attack strategic targets by usually resorting to suicide attacks (martyrdom operations). In addition, to strengthen Islamist movements worldwide, Al Qaeda, together with its former host — the Islamic Movement of Taliban, the de-facto government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, trained several tens of thousands of Muslims all over the world until the US intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001.

Decentralisation

Al Qaeda training infrastructure has gravely suffered as a result of the US campaign in Afghanistan. Except during the first three months of the confrontation, there have not been signs of mass desertions from the Taliban or Al Qaeda indicating the state of the morale within the rank and file. Like the dispersal of bees when a hive is attacked, Al Qaeda operatives, financiers, organisers of attacks and other experts are moving from the centre of Pakistan and Afghanistan to the periphery. The groups that Al Qaeda and the Taliban used to train and were financed in Asia, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and the Caucasus, are now using these very places for sanctuary and protection. Al Qaeda relations with its associate groups that were active in local and regional conflicts intensified after the formation of the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders in 1998. By decentralising the organisation and also opening new facilities for training recruits in many of the regional theatres such as in Mindanao in the Philippines, the Pankishi Valley in Georgia, Algeria and other lands of *jihad* that provided the opportunity, Al Qaeda has successfully networked with disparate groups and in some cases co-opted their leaders. This was particularly in the case in Southeast Asia.

Immediately after Al Qaeda attacked US diplomatic targets in East Africa in August 1998 and when Pakistan started to arrest Al Qaeda recruits and operatives in transit to and from Afghanistan, Al Qaeda once again began to establish regional training facilities. Al Qaeda recruits from Southeast Asia were trained in MILF camps Hudaibie, Palestine and Vietnam, all in the Abu Bakar Complex. With the removal of Camp Abu Bakar by the Philippine forces, the training facility shifted to Poso, Sulawesi, in Indonesia where another Al Qaeda associate — Laskar Jundullah — established another training facility.

The loss of Afghanistan is a massive blow for Al Qaeda's guerrilla and terrorist capability. However, both the support it enjoys in the tribal areas as well as the pre-9/11 decentralisation is likely to ensure the survival of the

group. Although Al Qaeda has lost its key leaders such as its military commander Mohammed Atef alias Abu Hafs and its head of the military committee Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Al Qaeda's core and penultimate leadership that provides the strategic and tactical direction is still intact.[10] As long as Osama bin Laden and Ayman Al Zawahiri survives, the group itself will survive. Furthermore, the Islamist milieu both in the Muslim territorial (Asia, Middle East, Caucasus) and migrant communities (Europe, North America, Australia) continues to provide the bulk of the recruits, finance and other forms of support. As the focus of the coalition is largely military, the robust Islamist ideology of Al Qaeda — that has gone unchallenged — is ensuring the survival of the group. Al Qaeda is trying to replenish its human losses (killed, captured, and arrested) and material wastage (weapons and other supplies) both inside and outside Afghanistan. As a result, Al Qaeda's global network — with members drawn from 46 countries and activities in 98 countries — is still functional, including its operatives in Europe.[11] Although Al Qaeda operational cells planning and preparing for attacks have been disrupted in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom and in Scandinavia, Al Qaeda support cells disseminating propaganda, raising funds, recruiting, procuring supplies, and mounting surveillance on intended targets are still active. Its collaborators, supporters and sympathisers are filling the leadership vacuum created by the first wave of arrests of Al Qaeda leaders in Europe immediately after 9/11. The post-9/11 Al Qaeda cells are more clandestine, compact and self-contained, thus harder to detect and disrupt. As such, Western societies and their governments will face a low level, long-term continuous threat from Al Qaeda.

Current Threat

Post 9/11, Al Qaeda attempted but failed to destroy the US, UK, Australian, and Israeli diplomatic missions in Singapore. They also failed in striking a US warship off Singapore as well as US and British warships in the Strait of Gibraltar. In addition to Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, who attempted to destroy a commercial aircraft over the Atlantic, Al Qaeda also attempted to bomb the US embassy and American cultural centre in Paris and attack the US base in Sarajevo. It even attempted to poison the water supply to the US embassy in Rome. An Al Qaeda Sudanese member fired a surface to air missile at a US warplane taking off from the Prince Sultan airbase in Saudi Arabia in 2001 and a similar attempt was made against an Israeli commercial airliner in Mombassa a year later. Al Qaeda suicide bombers also attacked

a French oil tanker off Yemen and US troops in Kuwait in October 2002. To instigate Islamists to strike worldwide Jewish targets, Nizar Seif Eddin al-Tunisi (Sword of the Faith, the Tunisian) alias Nizar Nouar, an Al Qaeda Tunisian suicide bomber, rammed a Liquid Petroleum Gas vehicle into Ghriba Synagogue, Africa's oldest Jewish Synagogue, in Djerba, Tunisia, killing 14 German tourists, including one child, and five Tunisians on 11 April 2002. An Al Qaeda front, The Islamic Army for the Liberation of the Holy Sites, claimed responsibility for the attack and subsequently an interview by Abdel Azeem Al Muhajir, an Al Qaeda military commander, confirmed it as an Al Qaeda operation.

Due to the difficulty of operating in the post-9/11 environment, Al Qaeda has delegated and devolved many of its responsibilities to other Islamist movements (parties and groups) that operate under the Al Qaeda umbrella. In a number of theatres, Al Qaeda is operating directly and through a number of groups with which it hitherto shared training, financial, and operational infrastructure in Afghanistan. This phenomenon is most visible in Pakistan where two-dozen attacks by Al Qaeda and its associated groups have occurred since 9/11. Beginning with the massacre of the Christians in Bhawalpur in the Punjab district in October 2001, Al Qaeda has launched a number of terrorist operations including the kidnapping and murder of *The Wall Street Journal* journalist Daniel Pearl and a church bombing in Islamabad killing a US diplomat's wife and daughter. A suicide bomber of Harakat-ul Mujahidin-al-Aalami, an Al Qaeda associate group, killed 11 Frenchmen and 12 Pakistanis on 18 May 2002. The well-planned attack was conducted after mounting surveillance on the Sheraton hotel and the bus route used by French naval engineers and technicians working on the submarine project in Karachi. The suicide vehicle bomb attack by an Al Qaeda associate group against the US Consulate in Karachi on 14 June 2002 injured a US marine and killed 11 Pakistanis. Using the same vehicle, they also targeted Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on 26 April 2002, but the remote control failed in detonating the explosives-laden vehicle.

While the Taliban is a guerrilla force, Al Qaeda remains a terrorist group. The Taliban operates somewhat openly and Al Qaeda operates clandestinely. The Taliban-Al Qaeda combined strategy is to install a regime in Pakistan that is at the very least a regime neutral to the Islamists. They believe that the future survival of Al Qaeda and Taliban along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border will depend on their ability to generate sustained support from Pakistan. As such, they are likely to target President Musharraf repeatedly until he is killed or removed from office. Despite the capture or death of nearly 500

Al Qaeda and Taliban members, Al Qaeda has realised that Pakistan is more important than Afghanistan for their survival. Al Qaeda also mounted at least two clandestine operations to assassinate President Hamid Karzai and other cabinet ministers. After a traffic accident both an Afghan and a foreigner in an explosive (Semtex)-laden Toyota were arrested in the centre of Kabul on 29 July 2002. In September 2002, Al Qaeda mounted a second assassination operation that was disrupted by Karzai's US bodyguards. In addition, an unknown group positioned a claymore mine on a route usually taken by the Presidential motorcade. Al Qaeda has established attack cells to topple Karzai in Afghanistan and Musharraf in Pakistan.[12]

In an effort to make a comeback, the Taliban and Al Qaeda have attempted to replace losses in their rank and file by promoting middle level and junior leaders as well as engaging in fresh recruitment. For example, to compensate for the loss of Pakistani state support for the Taliban, Mullah Omar has established Lashkar-e-Omar — a covert network of support organisations in Pakistan — to sustain a low intensity campaign in Afghanistan and in the area. By instigating its associate groups in Kashmir such as Harakat-ul Mujahidin and Jaish-e-Muhamad to intensify violence in Kashmir, the Taliban has also forced Pakistan to re-deploy its troops on the Afghan border along the 2,414 kilometer-long India-Pakistan border. By exploiting the porosity of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are trying to re-establish their lines of communication, supplies, and recruits. The Taliban, Al Qaeda, and other associate groups are all harnessing the Islamist milieu in Pakistan and overseas (both territorial and migrant) to ensure a revival in support (encouragement, funds, and supplies) necessary for survival and sustenance. Nonetheless, the response has been weak.

With the loss of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, the surviving Al Qaeda leadership will now have to re-establish communication with its associate groups and its various scattered cells. For example, to revive support, Al Qaeda will have to re-establish linkages with its affiliate NGOs and other charities overseas. Most of these NGOs and charities have been targeted by the US and other governments actively working with the US to fight terrorist-infiltrated organisations. With the failure of Al Qaeda to strike tactical US, Allied, and Coalition targets worldwide after 9/11, the group is considering reverting to both tactical and strategic targets. Although suicide terrorism coupled with conventional attacks have proved to be the most effective, the group is also considering revisiting the maritime and the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) scenarios,[13] options Al Qaeda considered prior to 9/11.

Al Qaeda has suffered setbacks and lacks the capability to launch large attacks. Still, its members desire to be the "elite" of the terrorist groups and always attempt to operate on the cutting edge of "terrorist" technology. Despite severe losses, Al Qaeda continues to inspire and instigate a wide constituency of groups and individuals to take on the fight for *Allah*. As seen in a number of small and sporadic attacks in Europe, Middle East and Asia, Islamist groups are engaging in a range of options — arson, shooting, throwing grenades, and exploding Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) against Jewish, Christian, and Hindu targets. The Islamists continue to inspire and instigate violence against "the enemies of Islam", "the infidels" and the "unbelievers" both by word of mouth and in over 1,000 sites on the Internet. The Islamists are operating across a wide spectrum, from the low tech to the high tech, stretching government resources and weakening security counter-measures. This demonstrates the success of Al Qaeda in educating a much wider constituency to challenge the West and Muslim regimes friendly to the West.

Primary Target

As the protector of "false Muslim leaders" and "corrupt Muslim regimes" in the Middle East, the United States has been identified as the "head of the poisonous snake" and therefore remains the principal target of Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda's preference was reflected when Osama bin Laden announced, "The battle has moved to inside America. We will continue this battle, God permitting, until victory or until we meet God."[14] Until US intelligence agencies infiltrate terrorist groups, a task that cannot be accomplished in the short term (one or two years), it is reasonable to assume that the US is as vulnerable as it was before 9/11. The governments that assist the US in its campaign in Afghanistan as well as the governments that have disrupted Al Qaeda cells on their soil have earned the wrath of Al Qaeda. After, for example, the Singaporean government disrupted cells of Jemaah Islamiyah (Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian arm operating in Singapore), the leadership relocated in Indonesia and attempted to crash a plane on to the Changi International Airport in Singapore. Similarly, in retaliation for Pakistan's support for the US, several Islamist groups in Pakistan have attacked soft targets nationwide. For instance, Islamist terrorists killed four Pakistanis at a Christian school for children of foreign aid workers in Murree Hills on 5 August and three others in the church of a Christian hospital in Taxila on 9 August 2002.

The threat picture clearly shows that Al Qaeda is constrained from launching another large-scale attack akin to 9/11, but is still able to conduct

small- and medium-scale attacks on the scale of Bali and Mombassa. With unprecedented security, intelligence, and law enforcement cooperation and heightened public alertness, Al Qaeda is finding it difficult to engage in extensive reconnaissance/surveillance and rehearsals, pre-requisites for conducting coordinated simultaneous attacks. Being aware of the virtues of patience, Al Qaeda is likely to mark time tasking its associate groups. Nonetheless, if the security situation deteriorates, Al Qaeda is likely to identify the gaping holes in the post-9/11 security architecture and task its super cells to plan, prepare, and execute multiple mass casualty attacks. For the time being, due to the limitations of mounting large-scale operations against population centres, economic targets and transportation infrastructure, Al Qaeda's super cells will likely be hibernating. As the group wishes to select its targets wisely it is unlikely to expend resources on opportunity targets unless absolutely necessary, such as to make its presence felt. Of the dozen medium- and small-scale attacks conducted by Al Qaeda and its associate groups against US, Allied, and Coalition targets worldwide, only a fraction have been successful. Al Qaeda has acknowledged that it failed due to tighter international security measures. Nevertheless, Al Qaeda, like a wounded animal, is determined to strike back. As a result of effective security measures, the Al Qaeda is shifting tactics, stretching the threat spectrum to include a wider range of targets. Al Qaeda's change in its *modus operandi* includes: marking time; operating through associate groups; providing them trainers and funds; and directly and indirectly influencing their strategic and tactical direction. As long as the threat to Al Qaeda remains, the network is likely to invest and operate through its associated groups.

Especially after the arrest of its operational commander Khalid Sheikh Mohammad on 1 March 2003, Al Qaeda has lost tactical control of its operational cells. Nevertheless, until the command and communication network between the surviving leadership and the cells are rebuilt, Al Qaeda will compensate for the lack of direction by issuing audio recordings and public statements. For instance, through its website alneda.com, Al Qaeda is dispensing advice to the Iraqi people and the few hundred foreign mujahidin groups inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries, to be patient and to prepare slowly but steadfastly for guerrilla warfare. In its initial reaction to the fall of Baghdad on 11 April 2003, Al Qaeda posted an article on the Internet titled "The Crusaders War in Iraq" in which guerrilla warfare was suggested as:

> The Most Powerful Weapon Muslims Have, and It Is the Best Method to Continue the Conflict with the [Superior Force of a] Crusader Enemy . . . With guerrilla warfare, the Americans were defeated in Vietnam

> and the Soviets were defeated in Afghanistan. This is the method that expelled the direct Crusader colonialism from most of the Muslim lands, with Algeria the most well known. We still see how this method stopped Jewish immigration to Palestine, and caused reverse immigration of Jews from Palestine. The successful attempts of dealing defeat to invaders using guerrilla warfare are many, and we will not expound on them. However, these attempts have proven that the most effective method for the materially weak against the strong is guerrilla warfare . . . [15]

Al Qaeda's post-9/11 pronouncements — including its spokesperson Abu Gaith Sulayman's recorded message — reveals that neither its intention nor its will to attack Western, especially US, targets has diminished. With the erosion of its capability to strike, Al Qaeda is likely to invest more in propaganda and other forms of information warfare. Conflicts of international neglect where Muslims are suffering — Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Maluku, Mindanao, Algeria and now Iraq, will continue to feature prominently on the Al Qaeda propaganda agenda.

The Southeast Asian Network

Most academics find it difficult to understand Al Qaeda because the group functions both in the operational and ideological domain. Apart from dispatching its operatives to target countries (such as the 9/11 team led by Mohammed Atta), it also provides the experts, training, and resources to other Islamist political and military organisations, so as to advance a common goal. As it has done in the case of existing Islamist networks worldwide, in Southeast Asia Al Qaeda has penetrated Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), a regional organisation with overt and underground networks extending from Southern Thailand to Australia. Among the parties and groups it has established, infiltrated and influenced are Jamaah Salafiyah in southern Thailand, Kumpulan Militan Malaysia in Malaysia; Laskar Jundullah in Indonesia as well as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front of the southern Philippines.

Al Qaeda and its associate group JI have divided their responsibilities, personnel, infrastructure and areas of operation into territorial organisations called Mantiqis. Mantiqi or M1 is based in Malaysia and covers Malaysia, Singapore, and southern Thailand. Mantiqi 2 or M2 is based in Solo, Central Java and covers the whole of Indonesia except for Sulawesi and Kalimantan. Mantiqi 3 or M3 is based in Camp Abu Bakar, Maguindanao, Philippines and covers Borneo, including Brunei, the east Malaysian states of Sarawak

and Sabah as well as Kalimantan and Sulawesi in Indonesia and the southern Philippines. Mantiqi 4 or M4, covers Irian Jaya and Australia. By maintaining a low numerical strength, operating in the religious milieu, refraining from acquiring weapons until immediately before targeting, and strictly conforming to operational security, JI terrorist cells operated below the intelligence radar screen of Southeast Asian governments and public for nearly a decade until their detection in Singapore in December 2001.

Through physical and intellectual contact, Al Qaeda ideologues, trainers and operatives physically and ideologically strengthened a dozen Islamist terrorist groups, political parties, charities, and individuals in Southeast Asia. In addition to emphasising the importance of participating in a global *jihad*, it created a mission and a vision for the Islamists to build a regional caliphate, comprising Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Cambodia and Mindanao.

Al Qaeda — and JI — have been credited with many atrocities in Southeast Asia. In addition to its plans to assassinate Pope John Paul II and President Bill Clinton in Manila, as well as attempting to explode 11 airliners over the Asia-Pacific in early 1995, Al Qaeda detonated a bomb on a Tokyo-bound Philippine Airlines flight in December 1994, injuring 11 and killing one Japanese passenger. JI was responsible for the bombing of the residence of the Philippine Ambassador in Jakarta, and the simultaneous bombing of 30 churches that killed 22 and wounded 96 people in Jakarta, West Java, North Sumatra, Riau, Bandung, East Java and Nusatenggara on Christmas Eve 2000.[16]

JI has also played a pivotal role in the violence in Maluku that has killed over 5,000 people during the past five years. Further, Al Qaeda's Malaysian cell also hosted the USS Cole planners and provided the critical cover, finances (and nearly the flight training) to Zacarias Moussaoui, the alleged "20th" suicide hijacker. Moussaoui was originally sent to the Malaysian Flying Academy in Malacca for training. However, as the multi-engine planes he wished to learn to fly were not available he left for the US. Recent recoveries from Afghanistan include documents with extensive references to Al Qaeda's spiritual leader in Southeast Asia, Abu Bakar Bashir, Hambali and other directing figures of the Al Qaeda network in the region.

With the dismantlement of its training infrastructure in Afghanistan, Al Qaeda is increasingly looking towards the periphery including Southeast Asia. Although Al Qaeda has neither physically nor ideologically abandoned Afghanistan, it is seeking to compensate for the loss of a state-of-the-art training infrastructure by developing regional operational bases elsewhere

including Southeast Asia. As such, under the instruction of core leaders in Al Qaeda, JI has established regional training camps for both ideological and physical training and makeshift familiarisation camps, particularly in Malaysia and Australia. Islamists have been trained in facilities in Malaysia (Negri Sembilan), Indonesia (Poso, Sulawesi) the Philippines (Mindanao) and Australia (Blue Mountains) since 1993. The regional leader, Hambali, resident of Malaysia from 1985–1987, and who fought in the anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan was arrested in Thailand in August 2003.

There are clear indications that JI Indonesia is clearly the distinct node of the Al Qaeda network in the region. As a result of official Spanish investigations into Al Qaeda, the Indonesian government has reluctantly admitted that Al Qaeda operated a training camp in Poso. According to a 2002 report by the Indonesian State Intelligence Agency, BIN:

> The training camp led by Omar Bandon consisted of 8–10 small villages located side by side on the beach, equipped with light weapons, explosives and a firing range. Participants of the training are not only from the local people but also from overseas. The instructor of the physical training in the camp is Parlindugan Siregar, a member of the Al Qaeda network in Spain.[17]

Recently several videotapes of the training have also been recovered.[18] Apart from the ten "millennium bombers", the Indonesian government has yet to arrest and prosecute both the Poso trainees and the trainers. While it would be tempting to blame Indonesia, it is more pressing for governments within and outside the region to work steadfastly with President Megawati and her ministers, officials and the public. Failure to do so will mean Islamism moving from the periphery to the centre, threatening both Indonesia and its neighbours.

By continuing to work together with the local groups in Southeast Asia, Al Qaeda has access to a wide range of targets. As much as the local groups have depended on Al Qaeda in the past, the parent network has depended on local groups to advance its agenda. Immediately after Al Qaeda conducted the first World Trade Centre bombing in February 1993, the network looked eastwards in a quest to bomb 11 US airliners. Similarly, after Al Qaeda targeted US icons on 9/11, it planned to target US and other diplomatic targets in Southeast Asia. When Al Qaeda failed to conduct a significant attack in the world after 9/11, its most senior representative in Southeast Asia Hambali masterminded the Bali attack on 12 October 2002 and Jakarta's JW Marriott on 5 August 2003.

Despite partial government successes and failures against terrorist networks, Al Qaeda remains a threat to Southeast Asian governments and societies. Largely due to the tireless efforts of the intelligence community, especially of the Singaporean service, the region is aware of the existence of a resilient terrorist network. Only about a fourth of the operatives have suffered arrest or death. To be sure, parts of the network have suffered extensive damage, such as its Singaporean, Malaysian and Filipino (only Luzon) components. Nevertheless, the organisation's leadership; support (propaganda, recruitment, fundraising, procurement, transportation, safe houses); and operational (surveillance, attack) organs remain fully functional. Only through a regional approach involving all the countries can the group be successfully hunted down. For example, even with the success of apprehending many of the Bali bombing perpetrators, JI is still a threat in Indonesia as only the JI cells responsible for the Bali bombing have been targeted and JI as an organisation is still functional in Indonesia.

The Road to Bali

Immediately before Al Qaeda launched "Operation Holy Tuesday", its mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammad dispatched a 21-year old Canadian operative of Kuwaiti origin, Mohammed Mansour Jabarah alias Sammy to Southeast Asia to conduct attacks against US and allied targets. After spending two weeks in Karachi, Pakistan with Khalid Sheikh Mohammad and Hambali, Jabarah travelled to Malaysia through Hong Kong to meet with the JI cell planning to strike US and Israeli embassies in the Philippines. Jabarah contacted Zulkifli Marzuki alias Azzam, the secretary of JI, and met with Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana alias Mahmoud.[19] In order to meet with Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi alias Saad, an Indonesian JI member working with the MILF, Jabarah left for the Philippines with an Al Qaeda suicide bomber Ahmed Sahagi. After Jabarah and Ahmed reached Manila, they checked into the Horizon Hotel in Makati. Saad e-mailed Jabarah and provided a telephone number in Manila.[20] The Al Qaeda-trained explosives expert, Saad,[21] who spoke fluent Arabic, arrived in the hotel two days after and said that he had only 300 kg of TNT and needed additional time and money to procure four tons of explosives. After taking Jabarah to the US embassy and the office building housing the Israeli embassy, Saad added that the US embassy in Manila was not a good target since it was set back too far from the main road. Meanwhile the Israeli embassy was staffed by too few Israelis. After ten days in Manila, Jabarah, Ahmed, and

separately, Saad, returned to Malaysia in October 2001. Following a JI meeting in Kuala Lumpur, it was decided to strike targets in Singapore. As a prelude to mounting a suicide strike, Jabarah and Saad left for Singapore to work with a JI Singapore cell to videotape US, Israeli, British and Australian targets. After Saad returned to the Philippines to obtain the TNT in November 2001, Hambali arrived in Malaysia from Pakistan and advised Jabarah to cancel the Singapore operation and revert to the diplomatic targets in the Philippines.[22] Hambali believed that operations in the Philippines could be accomplished sooner since the explosives would not have to be shipped to Singapore. He stated that if the targets in the Philippines were unacceptable, they should find better targets in the Philippines. With the arrests of the JI members in Singapore, Jabarah and Hambali left for Thailand in mid-January 2002. As Jabarah provided nearly US$70,000 of Al Qaeda funds to JI, Hambali said he will "conduct small bombings in bars, cafes or nightclubs frequented by westerners in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines and Indonesia".[23]

Jabarah and Ahmed Sahagi were arrested in Oman in March 2002. Jabarah was in Oman to assist Al Qaeda operatives travelling through Oman to Yemen. Jabarah believes that Ahmed was deported to Yemen. When FBI interrogators asked about the potential targets in Asia, Jabarah noted that the planned attack in Singapore would not have been difficult. He said, "The US embassy is very close to the street and did not have many barriers to prevent the attack. An attack on the US Embassy in Manila would have been much more difficult, requiring at least two operations."[24] Jabarah added that this would most likely not have been successful, adding that a plane would have been needed to attack this building because the security was very tight.[25]

Al Qaeda dispatched four Afghan-trained Arab suicide bombers to Southeast Asia to destroy the US, British, Australian and Israeli diplomatic targets in Singapore. Moreover, regional groups have also started to commit their own suicide missions. The bomber that struck Paddy's Bar was discovered to be a suicide bomber and the police recovered his last will together with the last will of three other suicide terrorists.[26] As Bali was the first mass casualty attack in Southeast Asia, this clearly demonstrates how Al Qaeda has successfully ideologically indoctrinated local and regional groups. Although the numbers of attacks will be small and infrequent, Southeast Asia is likely to witness further suicide attacks with time. Former JI chief in Singapore, Mas Selamat Kastari, who was arrested in Tanjung Pinang, Bintan, Indonesia, on 3 February 2003, was planning to crash an Aeroflot plane on to Changi International Airport both to "destroy" the airport and also to send a message to Russia for its "treatment of the Chechens". This action demonstrated how Al Qaeda has

transferred its tactic of suicide and more importantly its ideology of a global *jihad* to local and regional groups.

Conclusion

In many ways, Islamism of the Al Qaeda brand will survive because Al Qaeda has been successful in decentralising. With the targeting of the Afghan-Pakistan border where both Al Qaeda and the Taliban (Mullah Omar Faction) are concentrated, the group will depend on its regional networks to continue the fight. Events in the region clearly demonstrate that JI, the most important partner of Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian network, has taken on the role of its mother group. Al Qaeda's disrupted Singapore operation clearly demonstrates the group's intentions and capabilities. The threshold for terrorism — both the rapidly increasing scale of support for conducting attacks and both the attacks and attempted attacks themselves — has clearly increased in Southeast Asia.

Recent experience suggests that the fight against terrorist networks has proven to be difficult. The groups in Southeast Asia present no exception. Islamist terrorist groups have suffered gravely particularly in Afghanistan, but their core leaderships are alive and their ideology remains intact. The periodic attacks and fresh propaganda indicate that the leadership and membership will continue the fight.[27] Amidst security countermeasures, the groups have demonstrated their capacity to replicate, regenerate and reorganise. Despite the reverses and damage suffered at all levels, the threat posed by the global terrorist organisation has not diminished. The highly experienced and committed "experts" are planning and preparing for the next operation. Al Qaeda cells are probing the gaping holes in the post-9/11 security architecture to strike. Wherever there are resources available and the opportunity, Al Qaeda super cells will strike. Today, no single country can protect itself from a multinational terrorist organisation. For instance, Malaysia and Singapore cannot protect themselves as long as Al Qaeda-JI has a robust presence in Thailand and Indonesia. The first step towards reducing the immediate threat to Southeast Asia is to develop and implement a multi-pronged, multidimensional, multi-agency approach by ASEAN countries to target Al Qaeda's support and operational infrastructure at home and in the immediate neighbourhood. In parallel, the region must contribute to the international effort to fight the global network. For example, both human intelligence and technical intelligence generated by Southeast Asia and Australasian agencies have played an important role in the global fight against terrorism. Indeed, the war on terrorism in Southeast Asia will be a long and arduous one. Governments in

this region must work together if they are to have any chance of eliminating the terror threat.

Notes

1. I wish to thank Dr. Kumar Ramakrishna for his invitation to write this paper, Dr. Andrew Tan for his valuable comments, and Yeo Wei Meng for his research assistance.
2. For example: Kurdish Workers Party, northeastern Turkey; Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, northeastern Sri Lanka; Palestine Liberation Organisation, Palestinian Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, The Occupied Territories; Armed Islamic Group and Salafist Group for Call and Combat, Algeria; Moro Islamic Liberation Front and Abu Sayyaf Group, southern Philippines; Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, Colombia; Irish Republican Army, Northern Ireland; Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists), Nepal.
3. Osama bin Laden, Untitled Audio Tape, Al Jazeera, Arab Satellite Television Network, 12 November 2002. In addition to the US and Israel, Osama identified Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and Australia as its enemies.
4. The numerical strength of Al Qaeda is based on debriefings of Al Qaeda members in US custody. Most informed members estimate the strength at between 3,000–4,000 members at the time of US intervention in Afghanistan in October 2001.
5. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
6. Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, Debriefing, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), US Department of Justice, 6 August 2002.
7. As Al Qaeda is a learning organisation, it studies all operations where it has suffered losses and improves the next time. The "loosing and learning" doctrine is typical of sophisticated groups.
8. Abdullah Azzam, Al Qaidah al Sulbah, Al Jihad, 41, April 1988, p. 46.
9. Azzam, Al Qaidah al Sulbah.
10. Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, pp. 288–289.
11. Estimate by US operational agencies working with counterpart agencies elsewhere.
12. Interview with Chief of Police of Afghanistan, General Din Mohammed Jurat and other officials, Asia Counter Terrorism Conference, Tokyo, 19 March 2003.
13. For instance, Al Qaeda paid US$1.5 million to a Sudanese military officer in 1993 to purchase a Uranium canister from South Africa. However the group was duped as it was sold an externally radiated canister.
14. Interview, Al-Jazeera's Kabul correspondent Tayseer Allouni, 21 October 2001.
15. Formerly available at <www.alneda.com>, accessed on 11 April 2003. Link now defunct.
16. For more details, see Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*, chapter on Al Qaeda in Asia.

17. Al Qaeda infrastructure in Indonesia, BIN, Jakarta, 2002.
18. While the first tape was recovered in an Egyptian bazaar, a second tape was recovered in the residence of an Al Qaeda supporter in Leicester, UK. Another tape was recovered in Afghanistan by CNN journalist Nic Robertson.
19. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing, 6 August 2002.
20. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing.
21. In Afghanistan, Saad trained under Abu Kebab, Al Qaeda's Egyptian bomb making expert, in 1995.
22. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing.
23. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing.
24. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing.
25. Jabarah, FBI Debriefing.
26. Personal communication, General I. M. Pastika, Chief Investigator, Bali bombings, February 2003.
27. To nurture existing and rekindle new Muslim migrant and territorial support, on 10 September 2002 Al Qaeda issued a 100-page document seeking to justify why they struck America's most outstanding landmarks on 11 September 2001.

Chapter 6

Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia: Exploring the Linkages

Zachary Abuza

At the advent of the war on terror in the fall of 2001, there was a great deal of scepticism by politicians and pundits alike throughout Southeast Asia that Al Qaeda had penetrated their region. The conventional wisdom was that although every country in Southeast Asia has a Muslim community — indeed Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world — Islam was built upon indigenous culture and was thus more moderate. The vast majority of Muslims in Southeast Asia are secular and tolerant and they eschew the violence and radicalism associated with Islam in the Middle East and South Asia. Because Southeast Asia was the "Islamic fringe", few believed that Al Qaeda could have penetrated these societies, leading to both denial and complacency by several governments with devastating results. It was not until the 12 October 2002 terrorist attack on Bali, 13 months after the September 11 attacks on the United States, that opinions began to change and the Indonesian government acknowledged that Al Qaeda was active within the archipelago.

A thorough study of Al Qaeda's penetration of Southeast Asia, and its linkages to regional groups such as the Jemaah Islamiyah, Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), the Rabitatul Mujahidin and other organisations, is impossible in the space allotted this chapter. A more comprehensive elaboration of the subject can be found in my study, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror.*[1]

This essay seeks to explain the linkages of Al Qaeda to the region, but also explore the nature of those linkages. At one end of the spectrum, there are clearly groups and individuals who are influenced by and share a similar worldview as Osama bin Laden. Indeed, Al Qaeda in many ways has been transformed from an organisation to an ideology. At the other end of the spectrum Al Qaeda has established its own network and grafted onto pre-existing Islamist movements and found common cause with them, such as with the MILF.

One thing is absolutely clear: in 1995 when the Ramzi Yousef cell was broken up and he and his two co-conspirators were arrested, no intelligence or law enforcement agencies looked beyond that case. Yousef was treated as a lone wolf there to conduct a single operation, not part of an international network. No one asked why Al Qaeda came to the Philippines and if they were linking up with regional groups. There were only three arrests and the entire infrastructure was left in place.

Understanding Al Qaeda

To understand how Al Qaeda penetrated Southeast Asia, we have to conceptualise what Al Qaeda as an organisation is. Al Qaeda is not a large, centralised, top-down organisation, but truly a network in every sense of the word. As John Arquilla notes, Al Qaeda was developed along "diverse, dispersed nodes who share a set of ideas and interests and who are arrayed to act in a fully internetted 'all-channel' manner".[2]

> Ideally there is no central leadership, command, or headquarters — no precise heart or head that can be targeted. The network as a whole (but not necessarily each node) has little to no hierarchy, and there may be multiple leaders. Decision-making and operations are decentralised, allowing for local initiative and autonomy. Thus the design may appear acephalous (headless), and at other times polycephalous (hydra-headed).[3]

"Vertically, Al-Qaeda is organised with Bin Laden, the emir-general, at the top, followed by other Al-Qaeda leaders and leaders of the constituent groups. Horizontally, it is integrated with 24 constituent groups. The vertical integration is formal, the horizontal integration, informal."[4] Al Qaeda is highly compartmentalised. "These groups share the principles of the networked organisation — relatively flat hierarchies, decentralisation and delegation of decision-making authority and loose lateral ties among dispersed groups and individuals."[5] This is not to say that they are completely independent and

autonomous, but once they have received the "direction" from Al Qaeda leaders, local operatives have some degree of flexibility in executing operations.

Why Southeast Asia?

There are a number of reasons why Al Qaeda turned to Southeast Asia. The first and foremost is that these are "countries of convenience" making the region an important back office of operations. Most countries had lax visa requirements (Malaysia or Indonesia for OIC states), were transit hubs (Thailand) or had porous borders (Philippines and Indonesia). The Philippines did not even have a computerised immigration system in place until a few years ago, making it easy to launder identities. Police and security forces were corrupt, allowing terrorists space to operate and train, and there were vast regions not under firm central government control in Indonesia and the Philippines. Business-friendly environments made it easy to establish front companies and business ventures. The region's banks were poorly regulated, with the exception of Singapore, and Malaysia's rush to position itself as a global centre for Islamic banking proceeded far faster than regulatory and legal oversight. Brunei is now facing the same problem. There are extensive *hawala* networks in the region as there are millions of Southeast Asians who work abroad. Thailand was and remains a centre of document forging and people smuggling. The region is awash in weapons. Central governments often do not exercise control over vast swaths of their territory. In short, the same underlying conditions that gave rise to transnational criminal groups have benefited international terrorists.

The second reason that Al Qaeda was attracted to Southeast Asia was that a small percentage of the population was becoming more influenced by a fundamentalist Islam and Wahhabism and Deobandism in particular. This has occurred gradually over time, but it is clear that political Islam is on the ascendancy in Malaysia and Indonesia. There are many reasons for this, but they included economic disparities, a backlash to Westernisation and globalisation, the lack of political freedom and democracy, the failure of secular states and secessionist aspirations. Wahhabism's introduction into the region can be explained by several factors: Gulf petro-dollars and Islamic charities funded mosque and school construction as well as other development assistance. Aid has been conditional on Wahhabi, not indigenous Sufi or moderate Sunni teachings. More Southeast Asian students have studied in Middle Eastern Islamic universities and *madrasahs*, in particular Egypt's al-Azhar and Yemen's al-Imam Universities, both of which espouse doctrinaire Wahhabism,

as well as the Pakistani and Afghan *madrasahs* that gave rise to movements such as the Taliban.

In addition to the schools established with Gulf money were a number of schools established by returned Mujahidin, veterans of the Afghan war against the Soviet Union. It cannot be emphasised enough how important the anti-Soviet war was. Although there were no more than 1,000 Southeast Asian *jihadis*, they returned to Southeast Asia, convinced of the righteousness of their cause, and confident that they could defeat their own secular governments.

Al Qaeda was able to build on its personal relationships with veterans of the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. Undeniably, the Afghanistan experience was the formative experience in the Southeast Asian *jihadis'* lives. One cannot underestimate how important the Afghan connection is: it was the basis for the Al Qaeda network around the world. As Peter Bergen wrote:

> Still, in the grand scheme of things the Afghan Arabs were no more than extras in the Afghan holy war. It was the lessons they learned from the *jihad*, rather than their contribution to it, that proved significant. They rubbed shoulders with militants from dozens of countries and were indoctrinated in the most extreme ideas concerning *jihad*. They received at least some sort of military training, and in some cases battlefield experiences. Those who had had their tickers punched in the Afghan conflict went back to their countries with the ultimate credential for later holy wars. And they believed their exertions had defeated a superpower.[6]

The leadership of almost every militant Islamic group in Southeast Asia, from the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia, Jemaah Islamiyah, Laskar Jihad and MILF, fought with the Mujahidin. In Indonesia, there was the "Group of 272" of returned veterans and the key leaders of radical groups in the region all are veterans of the Mujahidin: Jafar Umar Thalib, Hambali, Mohammed Iqbal Rahman, Nik Aziz Nik Adli, Abdurajak Janjalani, and others. By linking their domestic struggles with an international network, the leaders of these groups were able to pool and share resources, conduct joint training, and assist each other in weapons and explosives procurement, identity laundering and financial transfers. By working internationally, domestic-oriented groups were better able to achieve their goals.

These *jihadis* returned to Southeast Asia and established a small network of *madrasahs* which espoused Wahhabism. The JI directly owned a number of *madrasahs*, Islamic boarding schools, and was affiliated with a number of others. The most important *madrasah* is the Al Mukmin school in Solo,

Indonesia, but they also include the Al Tarbiyah Luqmanul Hakiem school in Johor, Malaysia (closed in 2002), the KMM's Sekolah Menengah Arab Darul Anuar in Kota Bahru, Malaysia, *Pesantren* Hidyatullah in Balikpapan, Kalimantan, *Pesantren* Darul Aman, in Gombara, Ujung Pandang, and the Al Islam School. These schools became the centres of recruiting, indoctrination and operations for JI.

Whereas there have always been Islamists in Southeast Asia, though a minority of the Muslim population, there were now *jihadists* who were willing to resort to violence to bring about the establishment of Islamic states governed by *shariah*.

Al Qaeda's Infrastructure

One of the aspects that made Southeast Asia so appealing to the Al Qaeda leadership in the first place was the network of Islamic charities, the spread of poorly-regulated Islamic banks, business-friendly environments, and economies that already had records of extensive money laundering. It is my contention that Al Qaeda saw the region, first and foremost, as a back office for their activities (especially to set up front companies, fundraise, recruit, forge documents, and purchase weapons). Only later did the region become a theater of operations in its own right as an Al Qaeda affiliate organisation in Southeast Asia, the Jemaah Islamiyah, developed its own capabilities.

It is Al Qaeda's logistical network that allows its operatives, the JI and disparate groups to maintain their ties. Much of Al Qaeda's funding is thought to come from charities, either unwittingly or intentionally siphoned off. This is possible as Al Qaeda inserted top operatives into leadership positions in several charities in Southeast Asia.

In Islamic culture, Muslims are expected to donate 2.5 percent of their net revenue to charity, known as *zakat*.[7] There are some 200 private charities in Saudi Arabia alone, including 20 established by Saudi intelligence, that send some $250 million a year to Islamic causes abroad.[8] The three most important of these are the Islamic International Relief Organisation (IIRO), which is part of the Muslim World League, a fully Saudi state-funded organisation, the al Haramain Islamic Foundation, also based in Saudi Arabia, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth.[9] Although most of the money goes to legitimate charitable work designed to win support, such as mosque construction, charities, cultural centres, and NGOs, much of the money is diverted to clandestine activities. *Zakat* taxes are common throughout Southeast Asia, indeed in late 2001, the Indonesian government agreed to make *zakat* tax

deductible in order to encourage charitable donations. Yet unlike the West where NGOs and charities are closely regulated and audited, they are almost completely unregulated in Southeast Asia, allowing for egregious financial mismanagement and the diversion of funds to terrorist cells. Bin Laden's initial foray into the region came in the form of charities run by his brother-in-law Jamal Khalifa in the Philippines, including a branch of the IIRO.

Khalifa established several other charities and Islamic organisations in the Philippines, ostensibly for charity and religious work, which channeled money to extremist groups, including a branch office of the Saudi charity MER-C International and two local NGOs, Islamic Wisdom Worldwide and the Daw'l Immam Al Shafee Centre. He also established Al-Maktum University in Zamboanga using funds from the IIRO.[10] According to the IIRO's office in Saudi Arabia, its activities include supporting an orphanage and dispensary in Cotabato City, as well as dispensaries and pharmacies in Zamboanga. It provided food and clothing to internally displaced people who fled war zones. In addition, IIRO funding went to schools and scholarships. The IIRO asserted that it always did this if not in cooperation with the government, with at least official approval. Perhaps the most important NGO was the little known International Relations and Information Centre.[11] The IRIC engaged in numerous activities, for the most part philanthropic: livelihood projects, job training (carpentry, fish farming, farming), orphanages, Islamic schools and other social work.[12] According to the Philippine National Security Advisor, Roilo Golez, Khalifa "built up the good will of the community through charity and then turned segments of the population into agents".[13]

Yet, the IIRO quickly caught the interest of the Philippine police and military intelligence, which saw it as a front organisation for insurgent activities. "The IIRO which claims to be a relief institution is being utilised by foreign extremists as a pipeline through which funding for the local extremists are being coursed through", a Philippine intelligence report noted.[14] An Abu Sayyaf defector acknowledged that "the IIRO was behind the construction of mosques, school buildings and other livelihood projects" but only "in areas penetrated, highly influenced and controlled by the Abu Sayyaf".[15] For example, in Tawi Tawi, the director of the IIRO branch office was Abdul Asmad, thought to be the Abu Sayyaf's intelligence chief, before he was killed on 10 June 1994. Scholarships, likewise, were given to students to become Islamic scholars. The defector said the IIRO was used by bin Laden and Khalifa to distribute funds for the purchase of arms and other logistical requirements of the Abu Sayyaf and MILF, "only 10 to 30 percent of the foreign funding goes to the legitimate relief and livelihood projects and the rest go to terrorist

operations".[16] The earliest financial dealings between the Abu Sayyaf and Khalifa date to 1991, when the group was founded.

The Philippine government asserts that all of the charities run by Khalifa in the Philippines, that were used to funnel money to the Abu Sayyaf group and the MILF, were shut down.[17] The linkages between Khalifa and Yousef, and the fact that terror suspect Wali Khan Amin Shah was supposedly an employee of the IIRO, was too much for the Philippine authorities to countenance. Yet, complained one senior intelligence official to me, "we could not touch the IIRO".[18] It took the Philippine government almost six years to shut the IIRO's office in the Philippines. Still, from 2000 until September 2001, the IIRO still funded projects in the country through its representative offices in Malaysia and Indonesia. The IRIC's operations and staff were taken over by another Islamic charity, the Islamic Wisdom Worldwide Mission, headed by a close Khalifa associate Mohammed Amin al-Ghafari, in 1995.[19] The Daw'l Immam Al Shafee Centre, likewise, remains operating.

In Indonesia, a similar development of charities as terrorist fronts occurred. JI and Al Qaeda leaders assumed leadership positions, often becoming regional branch chiefs, or formed alliances with several important Saudi-backed charities, including MER-C, the IIRO and al Haramain.

One of the most important charities in all of this was KOMPAK (Committee to Alleviate the Impact of Crisis), an independent arm of the Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, founded on 1 August 1998.[20] KOMPAK officials while acknowledging that they operate in regions struck by sectarian conflict (such as Aceh, Poso and the Malukus), insist they are there to alleviate the crises and provide necessary relief. They denied any links to "*jihad* activities". An official declared, "We never give our money to the *Mujahidin* or terrorists. We give our money to the needy, unemployed of the *ummah.*" This assertion should be taken guardedly. Without a doubt KOMPAK has been involved in charitable work, especially food distribution. Yet the former chairman of KOMPAK's South Sulawesi office was Agus Dwikarna, and the head of the Jakarta branch was Tamsil Linrung. Both men have been implicated in militant activities. Moreover, one of Abu Bakar Bashir's top lieutenants Aris Munandar, suspected of purchasing much of the explosives for the bombings across the region on the anniversary of 9/11, was the head of KOMPAK. When asked about that, the Secretary of KOMPAK stated, "What he does outside of KOMPAK is not our responsibility."[21] Yet, KOMPAK also produced propaganda and recruitment videos for Dwikarna's paramilitary group the Laskar Jundullah, emphasising both their military strength and sense of Muslim persecution.[22]

In addition to these senior KOMPAK officials being arrested for or detained on suspicion of terrorism, KOMPAK has joint projects with important Saudi Charities, notably, the IIRO, al Haramain, and MER-C, often serving as their executor agency.

Again, a similar cast of characters emerges, with overlapping leadership. Agus Dwikarna was the local representative of al Haramain in Makassar in South Sulawesi, which Omar Al-Faruq, a now-detained senior Al Qaeda operative operating in Southeast Asia, admitted was the largest single source of Al Qaeda funds into Indonesia.[23] Furthermore, Sheikh Bandar, the head of al Haramain, and a frequent visitor to Indonesia, kept a second wife in Surabaya in east Java, and brought in significant amounts of cash for JI — which was delivered through Ahmed al-Moudi, the head of al Haramain's Jakarta office.[24] Faruq lived near Agus Dwikarna in Makassar (Ujung Pandang) in South Sulawesi and was the key backer of Dwikarna's Laskar Jundullah.[25] Faruq also worked closely with al-Moudi and Sheikh Bandar.

In the investigation of Reda Seyam, a former Islamic charity official in Bosnia in the mid- to late-1990s, and a man officials believe to be the most senior Al Qaeda financier in Southeast Asia, further links to al Haramain and KOMPAK were uncovered. Seyam was responsible for the production of "documentaries" used for propaganda, fundraising and recruiting purposes, similar to what he did in the 1990s in Bosnia. These documentaries featured two JI paramilitaries: the Laskar Mujahidin and the Laskar Jundullah. Seyam was also linked to another charity, the Komite Zakat Infaq Dan Shadoqoh ISNET, which solicits most of its donations from Indonesians living overseas.

The infrastructure that Al Qaeda established in the region includes not just charities, but also corporate entities. The *modus operandi* of so many Al Qaeda cells was that while they were given some seed money and additional funds, most cells were expected to become self-sustaining over time. Southeast Asia, the fastest growing region in the world in the early- to mid-1990s, had business friendly environments and encouraged the profusions of firms and general trading companies. Two different types of firms were established. The most important were front companies — corporate entities that were established with a minimum amount of capital investments, that generated few if any profits, and whose primary purpose was to purchase materials or cloak other aspects of terrorist operations. The second type of company were those that were given Al Qaeda funds for start up capitalisation, but whose primary purpose was revenue generation.

The most important front companies were established by JI's Malaysian cell to channel Al Qaeda funds and procure weapons and bomb-making material.

They were established at the rate of approximately one a year between 1993–1996. These include two general trading companies, a bio-medical lab and a computer firm. Most had overlapping board membership.

Green Laboratory Medicine was established on 6 October 1993. Its director was Yazid Sufaat, a former Malaysian army captain who had studied biochemistry in California in the 1980s.[26] Upon his return to Malaysia, he was reproached by his family for his loss of Islamic values while abroad, and began attending prayer sessions as a result of which he came into contact with a militant preacher, Riduan Isamuddin, aka Hambali. Sufaat was sent to Pakistan for religious training where he was subsequently recruited into Al Qaeda/JI. In June 2001 Sufaat traveled to Afghanistan where he underwent training in an Al Qaeda camp. He was arrested in mid-September 2001 when he tried to return to Malaysia from Afghanistan. This firm was instructed to purchase 21 tons of ammonium nitrate to be used in terrorist attacks in Singapore. (By way of comparison, the Oklahoma City bombing perpetrated by Timothy McVeigh, used two tons of ammonium nitrate). At the time of his arrest he had already purchased and dispatched four tons that remained unaccounted for until March 2003.

Konsojaya, established in 1994, was a trading company that ostensibly exported Malaysian palm oil to Afghanistan and imported honey from Sudan and Yemen. The firm was capitalised with RM100,000, and 5,998 of the 6,000 shares were controlled by Wali Khan Amin Shah and Medhat Abdul Salam Shabana. Konsojaya's original board of directors also included Hambali and his wife, Noralwizah Lee Binti Abdullah.[27] At a later date, a new five-member board was elected, and did not include Hambali nor his wife. The company played an important role as a front for moving money and purchasing chemicals and equipment for bomb-making. It was also implicated in Ramzi Yousef and Khalid Sheikh Mohammad's Oplan Bojinka, an attempt to simultaneously destroy 11 US jetliners over the Pacific in 1995.[28] Yousef and Wali Khan Amin Shah established another shell company, the Bermuda Trading Company, in 1994, as a cover to import chemicals for bomb making.

Yazid Sufaat also established Infocus Technology on 13 July 1995. Infocus Technology hired Zacarias Moussaoui, the alleged 20th hijacker, as a marketing consultant and was able to secure a visa for him to travel to the United States. Infocus was to pay Moussaoui a lump sum of $35,000 and then a monthly stipend of $2,500 to pay for his flight training in the United States.[29] Sufaat told Malaysian investigators that the money was never actually paid. But there is no evidence that his statement is honest or accurate. Another front company was Secure Valley, established on 4 October 1996. Little is known

about the purpose or operations of this general trading company, but it had many of the same boards of directors as the other three JI-linked firms.

In addition to these, there were several other JI-linked front companies. Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, according to the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, owned a security company in Kuala Lumpur, MNZ Associates, in which many key meetings took place.[30] Ibrahim Maidin, the spiritual leader of the Singapore JI cell, attempted to establish several very small chemical fertiliser import corporations, obviously as a legal cover to import ammonium nitrate.

Another JI-linked firm was uncovered in February 2003, with the arrest of Abdul Manaf Kasmuri, a former Malaysian army colonel, who headed a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Bosnia in the mid-1990s. Kasmuri had been a high-flyer in the military. He attended Malaysia's Royal Military College and then Sandhurst, the British Military Academy, where he won three batons of honour on graduation, including best foreign student. Kasmuri led the Bosnian peace keeping operation with distinction until he became disenchanted with the United Nation's failure to protect the Bosnian Muslim community, especially after the massacres following the Serb invasions of the six UN-designated "Safe Havens". Kasmuri began to support the Bosnian army's 7th and 9th battalions which were comprised of foreign *jihadis*, many of whom were Al Qaeda members and veterans of the Mujahidin in Afghanistan. When he was seen as having become too close to them, he was recalled by the Malaysian government and forced to take early retirement in 1995. He returned to Bosnia, however and became involved in aid work, when he was recruited into Al Qaeda. He spent time in Afghanistan, posing as a Filipino. He returned to Malaysia, and though he was wanted by Malaysian police, he became the human resources manager for an Islamic financial institution Koperasi Belia Islam,[31] based in Kuala Lumpur, that has close ties with the Islamic Youth Movement (ABIM) founded by jailed former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim. Kasmuri was also significantly involved in a JI-linked company called Excel Setia, as a shareholder and director.

Excel Setia was a privately owned general trading company that was run out of the off-shore haven of Labuan. Two of the other four directors/shareholders were senior JI officials, Zulkifli Marzuki and Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, both of whom are now under detention, one in Malaysia and one in Singapore.[32] Marzuki, an accountant, was the auditor for most of the JI related companies including those set up by Yazid Sufaat, Infocus Technology and Green Laboratories Medicine.

In addition, there are ongoing investigations of between three to six general trading companies in Bangkok, Thailand, that have been linked to firms on the UN list of designated terrorist supporting organisations. These include three Middle Eastern general trading companies that have had offices in Thailand since 1997, including Al Jallil Trading Co. Ltd., Al Amanah Enterprise Co. Ltd., and Sidco Co. Ltd. These three firms were raided by Thai intelligence officials following joint investigations with US and Israeli intelligence officials.[33] There are also investigations of several Al Qaeda-linked firms in Malaysia.

Front companies were not the only businesses established by Jemaah Islamiyah. There are also cases in which JI members established businesses, received contracts and businesses from JI supporters and then ploughed the proceeds back into the organisation. According to the Singapore government's *White Paper*, "All JI-run businesses had to contribute ten percent of their total earnings to the group. This money was to be channeled into the JI's special fund called *Infaq Fisabilillah* (Contributions for the Islamic cause or *jihad* fund)."[34] The *Infaq Fisabilillah* fund was controlled by the JI chief of operations, Hambali, and used to support the cost of travel and training of members to Al Qaeda camps in Afghanistan and MILF camps, to purchase arms and explosives and subsidize JI-run *madrasahs*.

The Al Risalah Trading Company of Malaysia is one such example. The firm was established by the son-in-law of Abdullah Sungkar, Feri Muchlis bin Abdul Halim, with some RM25,000 in startup capital. Halim, a 46-year old, was an Indonesian with permanent residency in Malaysia. His firm obtained a coveted license that allowed it to contend for government contracts. To that end, it was awarded contracts to install water pipes in Selangor, to provide stationery for a school, and a contract to build two schools in Selangor.[35] Halim was arrested in 17 April 2002, for suspected involvement in JI and the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM). The KMM was founded on 12 October 1995 by Zainon Ismail.[36] From 1999 to his arrest in May 2001, Nik Adli Nik Aziz, the son of PAS' spiritual leader Nik Aziz Nik Mat, led the KMM. Both Zainon Ismail and Nik Adli had fought against the Soviets.

Through the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), but linked to the JI are several Indonesian-based publishing houses and video production companies. The most important of these is the Hidyatullah press based in Yogyakarta, which is run by Irfan S. Awwas, Abu Bakar Bashir's right hand man and the head of the MMI.

The Nature of Linkages Between the Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda

There has been considerable debate in the region over the extent to which the JI is affiliated with Al Qaeda. Indeed Indonesian police chief D'ai Bachtar recently dismissed any such links between the two. Yet, JI must be seen as an integral part of Al Qaeda. Whereas Al Qaeda has established its own network of independent cells in the region, the JI is an important arm of the organisation. Although there is no evidence that JI members pledged *bai'ah* to Osama bin Laden, indeed all members of the JI pledged *bai'ah* — an oath of loyalty — to Abu Bakar Bashir, the organisation is very much at Al Qaeda's disposal. The relationship is at many levels, and they should dispel doubt about the connection between the two groups.

First, there is a considerable amount of overlapping membership. The JI's chief of operations Hambali, was revealed to be a member of Al Qaeda's *shura*, its top decision-making body. Along with Abu Zubaydah, Hambali was one of the only non-Arabs on the *shura*. To be sure, Hambali was not a member of bin Laden's inner circle, but his inclusion clearly signals the organisation's desire to establish a global network. With the arrests of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad in March 2003 and Tawfiq bin Attash in April 2003, Hambali's importance to the organisation became all the more central. His interrogations following his arrest in August 2003 have revealed a close working relationship with Khalid Sheikh Mohammad.

The second important piece of evidence came from the interrogation of Omar Al-Faruq. Faruq was a senior Al Qaeda official in the region. Recruited into the organisation in the early 1990s, from 1992 to 1995, he trained in camps in Afghanistan, himself becoming a trainer. In 1995 he was dispatched to an MILF camp in the Philippines where he trained JI members. In late-1998 to early-1999, he was dispatched to Indonesia, where he relied heavily on the Jemaah Islamiyah network. Faruq relied not just on JI personnel for his operations, but he indicated that he even worked through Bashir to plan all operations.

Al Qaeda has also played a significant role in the training of JI members. As mentioned above, Omar Al-Faruq, along with al Mughira al Gaza'iri, an Al Qaeda camp commander, were dispatched by Abu Zubaydah to the Philippines to train JI and MILF operatives.[37] Likewise, Indonesian militant Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi was recruited by Al Qaeda and dispatched back to Southeast Asia where he conducted bomb-making training in MILF camps.

One of the interesting mysteries of the Bali attack of 12 October 2002 is that two days before the attack, a Yemeni, Syafullah, entered the country on a false American passport and left immediately before the attacks. Although many conspiracy theorists in Indonesia believed that the bomb was too large and beyond the technical proficiency of those who were arrested, one official explained to me that the bomb was easily constructed and required no more expertise than a smaller one. However, what was complex was calculating the power of the detonator, and that the Al Qaeda operator was believed to have flown in at the last minute to complete the bomb. Al Qaeda continues to provide technological assistance to JI members, something that is clearly evident in the increasing size and lethality of JI bombs.

One of Faruq's most important roles was establishing a financial conduit between Al Qaeda and the JI. Another important tie, and this would become a *modus operandi* of Al Qaeda, was his marriage to the daughter of Haris Fadillah, a senior JI official and a leader of the JI's Laskar Mujahidin, a 500-man paramilitary group that was engaged in sectarian conflict in the Malukus.

In addition, following the arrests in Singapore and Malaysia in December 2001 and January 2002, Hambali organised an important meeting in Thailand to assess the JI's position and ability to conduct terrorist operations. Among those who attended the meeting was a Canadian-Kuwaiti, Mohammed Mansour Jabarah. Although he had spent time in the region in the fall of 2001, when he and Fathur Rohman al-Ghozi were conducting a final round of surveillance against targets in Singapore, he was sent to Hambali's January meeting to represent one of the most senior officials, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad.

This is not unusual. The January 2000 lieutenants meeting in Kuala Lumpur is telling. Senior Al Qaeda officials came to the region because they believed that they were safe. The meeting was held in the apartment of a JI member and several JI members were present.

Another piece of evidence regarding the inter-operability between the groups was the planned suicide bombing of a US naval ship making a port call in Singapore. Although the JI Singapore cell was charged with conducting the surveillance, planning the attack, and constructing the bomb, the operation was to be conducted by an Al Qaeda team flown in for the operation. In a similar operation a Somali Al Qaeda operative, Ghalib, sought to recruit Indonesian locals to assist him in a suicide attack on US naval vessels in Surabaya in May 2002.

Furthermore, the relationship between JI members and Al Qaeda seems to be cemented through an almost feudal arrangement based on marriage.

For example, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa was able to establish a close working relationship with the MILF through his marriage to the sister of Abu Omar, a Marawi-based Muslim student activist with links to the MILF. Hambali's marriages to Malaysian and Cambodian women allowed him to further develop ties to those communities. Omar Al-Faruq was able to develop close ties to the JI through his marriage to Mira Augustina, the 24-year old daughter of a Jemaah Islamiyah operative named Haris Fadillah who was killed in the Malukus on 26 October 2000.[38]

The link between a Spanish Al Qaeda cell, led by Imad Eddin Barakat Yarkas (Abu Dada) and his Indonesian lieutenant Parlindugan Siregar, and Al Qaeda training camps in Poso, again raises serious concerns. There is evidence that foreign *jihadis*, Reda Seyam and Rashid, both of whom were leaders of Mujahidin forces in Bosnia, were involved in both the Maluku and Poso, Sulawesi conflicts.

Finally, we need to raise an issue that is truly demanding further study, the JI's relationship to Al Qaeda cells in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the radical Harakat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), founded in 1992, is led by an associate of Osama bin Laden, Fazlul Rahman. The organisation is closely tied to one of the Al Qaeda-linked groups in Pakistan/Kashmir. Fazlul Rahman signed Osama bin Laden's 23 February 1998 declaration of holy war on the United States. HuJI has recruited from Bangladesh's 60,000 *madrasahs* and is now believed to have over 15,000 followers. HuJI has been implicated in scores of bombings, including two attempted assassinations of then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in July 2000. HuJI has also been increasingly involved in politics in Bangladesh. Its slogan, "We will all be Taliban and Bangladesh will be Afghanistan", belies its political agenda. Though in itself is not a political party, many of its members are part of Islamic Oikya Jote, which was one of two Islamic parties (the other being Jamaat-e-Islami), that formed a coalition government with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in October 2001. Both Islamic parties have a history of links to terrorist organisations and have openly supported the Taliban and Al Qaeda.[39]

Fazlul Rahman's HuJI also actively recruited Myanmarese Rohingyas and sent them to fight in Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chechnya.[40] There are some 200,000 Rohingyas in Bangladesh. The largest Rohingya organisation in Bangladesh is the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), established in the early 1980s, which has a large training camp in Ukhia, southeast of Cox's Bazaar. The militant group has actively recruited from among the

destitute community and in the 1980s sent volunteers to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets. Bertil Lintner has found that the RSO maintained close links and received material support from other South Asian militant organisations including the Hizb-e-Islami in Afghanistan, the Hizb-ul-Mujahidin in Kashmir, and the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh.[41] Over 100 RSO fighters trained with the Hizb-e-Islami in Afghanistan, and Afghan trainers have come to RSO camps, which in the 1990s were taken over by HuJI.

On 21 December 2001, a ship, the MV Mecca, offloaded some 150 Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters at the Bangladeshi port of Chittagong. "Portworkers that night said they saw five motor launches ferry in large groups of men from the boat wearing black turbans, long beards and traditional *Islamic salwar kameez*. Their towering height suggested these travelers were foreigners, and the boxes of ammunition and the AK-47s slung across their shoulders helped sketch a sinister picture."[42] HUJI officials later confirmed that the men were Al Qaeda fighters. On 7 October 2002, the Indian government arrested a Myanmarese-born HUJI operative, Fazle Karim (Abu Fuzi) as he arrived in Calcutta by train from Kashmir. The government arrested four Yemenis, an Algerian, a Libyan and a Sudanese, who were implicated in militant arms training at a *madrasah* in the capital run by the Saudi charity, al Haramain, which was also raided by intelligence forces. They were all later released and the government stated that no incriminating evidence was found at the al Haramain office. Still, concerns remain that Bangladesh is increasingly important to Al Qaeda. Bangladesh's military intelligence services maintain very close ties with their counterparts in Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and have a history of providing operational support for Kashmiri rebels. Indeed, the port workers who saw the MV Mecca arrive claim that the man who greeted the militants was a major in the military intelligence service.

The JI's attempt to form alliances with other radical groups in the region, the Rabitatul Mujahidin, included the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation. Moreover, there is a growing body of evidence that JI members, including Hambali, before his arrest, sought refuge in Bangladesh, whose government has done little to crack down on the militants.

The Nature of Linkages Between the MILF and Al Qaeda

In many ways it is counter-intuitive that Al Qaeda and the MILF have become close allies. The MILF was established in 1978 (formally in 1984) when it broke away from the MNLF because the latter was seen as too secular. The MILF is an Islamist organisation, though its ultimate goal is to establish an

independent state in the Muslim dominated southern Philippine province of Mindanao.

Since its inception, the MILF had received most of its funding and weaponry from the Libyan government. But the MILF was always concerned about the reliability of state support, especially as the Libyan government had played such an important role, dating back to 1976, in brokering the Tripoli accords between the government of the Philippines and the MNLF.

Hence the MILF was open to aid from sources such as the JI. In return for the latter's aid, which the MILF increasingly relied on following Libya's 1996 role in bringing about the peace accord between the MNLF and the government, the MILF allowed JI operatives to use their secure base areas for training. Indeed, except for a brief period in 1999 when it was overrun by government forces, there was a separate camp within the MILF's camp for the JI. Several Al Qaeda trainers, including Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, Omar Al-Faruq and al-Mughira al-Gaza'iri were dispatched to the MILF's base, Camp Abu Bakar, in central Mindanao by Abu Zubaydah.[43] Indeed, the MILF set up a camp within the camp simply to house and train the JI operatives, Camp Hudaibie.

As Al Qaeda lost their 40 camps in Afghanistan and a number of training camps, including seven in Indonesia and two in Malaysia, have been shut down, one of the most critical factors in securing the JI's future is the ability to continue training a new generation of operatives at Camp Abu Bakar. The MILF has pledged that it will arrest any JI members found in its territory, but this must be regarded with a high degree of suspicion.

The MILF has done more than simply provide space and support for training JI operatives; much of the JI's material has come from MILF stockpiles and sources. For example, the one ton of explosives that Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi led investigators to came from the MILF's supplier, Hussein Ramos. Likewise, the JI's two paramilitaries, the Laskar Jundullah and the Laskar Mujahidin, were armed by weapons primarily supplied by the Philippine JI cell, procured from the MILF.

In February 2003, Philippine armed forces overran an MILF camp and captured a large number of documents that provide evidence that Al Qaeda still maintains close ties with the organisation. Philippine intelligence officials with whom I have spoken, believe there are still 12–17 Al Qaeda members fighting with the MILF.

Until the MILF cuts its ties to JI, we will have a terrorist problem in the region. Without the MILF camps and secure base area JI cannot train

effectively. To date there have been no incentives for the MILF to cut ties or cooperate. Although they strenuously deny it, the MILF resorts to terror when it suffers battlefield losses; such as this past spring when it bombed the Davao airport or after the 1999 offensive when it bombed the LRT in Manila. It has become standard operating procedure for them.

Although peace talks are set to resume again, there seems to be no willingness on the part of either side to compromise on the three issues that led to the breakdown of talks in 2002. First, the MILF has given no indication whatsoever that that they have abandoned their quest for an independent state or would accept autonomy. They believe that the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao has been a failure, and refuse to accept a similar proposal. Likewise, they are unlikely to accept joint development projects with the Philippine government. Third, they see cantonment, disarmament and demobilisation as tantamount to surrender.

On top of these are four additional issues. The first is the very palpable sense of mistrust on the part of the warring parties. It will take a long time to get back to the level of trust that was reached in the fall of 2001. The second is the apparent unwillingness of each side to implement the ceasefire, or alternatively, the inability to exert command and control. Third, the death of Hashim Selamat also calls into question the ability of the MILF Central Committee to cut deals. The fact is, we know very little about generational and factional differences and how this will play out in the peace process. The new MILF leader, Murad Ebrahim is known to be a pragmatic individual and a more moderate leader than Hashim Selamat, but we do not know how well he is holding the organisation together or his ability to make significant compromises. Fourth, the Philippine government, in the midst of a presidential election, is unlikely to yield much at the negotiating table. Although President Gloria Arroyo's poll numbers are substantially up and she is poised to break her vow and run for re-election, her appeal is not based on her policies but on the fact that none of the current crop of presidential aspirants has yet captured the imagination of Filipino voters. The outbreak of hostilities is likely, and to that end, terror will be part of the MILF arsenal, thus necessitating ties to JI and Al Qaeda. There is now significant evidence that there are two new camps in operation deep in MILF territory where Indonesians are being trained.

One thing that Al Qaeda did so well in Southeast Asia was it got groups such as the MILF, which had primarily national-agendas to think and act internationally. Al Qaeda was an important matchmaker and was able to convince organisations of the benefits of linking up to an international network.

A Shared World View

The Laskar Jihad is one of the best examples of Al Qaeda's influence, and its ability to find common cause. Although there is considerable suspicion that the Laskar Jihad is linked to Al Qaeda, there is nothing more than circumstantial evidence to support it.

Founded in January 2000 at a Yogyakarta football stadium, Jafar Umar Thalib was able to mobilise a small army to wage a *jihad* in the Maluku islands. Arguing that there was an international campaign to create a Christian republic in the heart of Indonesia, by May he had sent several hundred fighters to the Malukus armed with machetes and crude weapons, "so that they could feel safe in their own country".[44] Not by coincidence, Osama bin Laden had mentioned East Timor in his 1998 *fatwa*, and there was a shared conviction that never could the Muslims allow a Islamic state to be broken up. This explains the ferocity of the fighting in the Malukus. The influx of the Laskar Jihad paramilitary tipped the balance in favour of the Muslims,[45] and shortly thereafter Christians were ethnically cleansed from Ternate, the North Maluku capital. In all some 9,000 people died in the Maluku strife.

For the purposes of this chapter, there is a greater concern about the rise of the Laskar Jihad: the Maluku conflict served to attract radical Islamists from around the Muslim world. For example, seven Afghans arrived in Ambon on 7 July 2000 and were spirited away by Laskar Jihad forces. They joined some 200 other Afghan, Pakistani and Malays. Yet it is not just individuals, but financial support. According to one informant, "They maintain contact with the international Mujahidin network, including Osama bin Laden's group." He continued, "Wherever a *jihad* is in force, this network provides money and weapons and all tools needed for the *jihad*, and they mobilise fighters to go to the *jihad* area." The informant added, "This is exactly what is happening in the Malukus. Osama bin Laden is one of those who have sent money and weapons to *jihad* fighters in the Malukus." In addition, Abu Abdul Aziz and one other bin Laden lieutenant were dispatched to Ambon at the height of the Laskar Jihad's *jihad*.

Bin Laden, who met Thalib in 1987, offered funding for Laskar Jihad, but Thalib turned it down, though the Ambonese Laskar Mujahidin did not.[46] Thalib alleged that he turned down bin Laden's offer because he questioned bin Laden's piety. Indeed there is evidence that much of the Laskar Jihad's funding came from within the TNI.

Laskar Jihad however is unclear about its funding. The author has witnessed fund-raisers shaking people down in the streets of Central and Eastern Java.

Yet the Laskar Jihad's web page provides details for an account at the Bank of Central Asia, Indonesia's largest bank, to which wire transfers can be made from anywhere in the world. One Laskar Jihad fundraiser stated in an interview that the average donation is about RP70,000 ($6.60), about half of the cost of sending a fighter to the Malukus.

While there is sufficient evidence that much of the original funding for the Laskar Jihad forces came from rogue elements of the TNI, increasingly there is evidence that Thalib's assertion that the Laskar Jihad is a homegrown, locally funded movement is a sheer lie, and that his organisation exists because of covert aid from Islamists outside of Indonesia and the Al Qaeda network.

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the Indonesian government put an inordinate amount of pressure on Laskar Jihad not to take advantage of the attacks and mobilise its supporters for a *jihad* against the Americans. The military increased its presence in the Maluku Islands where Laskar Jihad-supported sectarian violence had killed some 9,000 people. And the Laskar Jihad leader, Jafar Umar Thalib, went to great pains to distance himself from bin Laden and the Al Qaeda network, though he had never previously done so. "Laskar Jihad does not have ties with Al Qaeda or any other organizations that are associated with Osama bin Laden or any form or part of his network. Lasker Jihad distances itself from Osama bin Laden and his followers."[47] Additionally, Thalib has suddenly gone out of his way to distance himself from bin Laden, now asserting that bin Laden is "very empty about the knowledge of religion".[48]

Yet Thalib has acknowledged that he maintains links with KMM and has coordinated his operations in Indonesia with Abu Bakar Bashir. Indeed the Laskar Jihad is a member of Bashir's umbrella organisation, the MMI. Still, there is evidence that Laskar Jihad forces were involved in street fights with JI's paramilitary groups, the Laskar Jundullah and Laskar Mujahidin.

On 16 October 2002, four days after the terrorist bomb attack in Bali left 202 people dead, the Laskar Jihad announced that it was disbanding. This announcement should be met with considerable suspicion and seen as a PR tactic. The Laskar Jihad knows when to lay low. Following 9/11, they were one of the most reticent Islamic groups in the country. Now they understand the political liability of being "Islamic fundamentalists". They made a show of withdrawing some 300 troops from Ambon, though a fraction of the total number there. Even if they disband their paramilitary, the parent organisation, the Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wa al-Jemaah will not be disbanded. They have offices in 70 cities around the country. They operate several large *madrasahs* and other organisations that espouse an intolerant brand of Salafi

and Wahhabi Islam. Indeed, Thalib announced that he wanted to focus on his students.[49] The Forum Komunikasi owns businesses, raises funds, and publishes a weekly newspaper. They are not going to relinquish this critical infrastructure even if they disband some of their paramilitaries. They will lay low, rename themselves, re-emerge, bringing *jihad*, intolerance and sectarian violence.

The fact is the Laskar Jihad and Al Qaeda share a similar worldview, a sense of Western persecution against Muslims and commitment to *jihad*. The Laskar Jihad may not be a constituent of Al Qaeda but that does not mean that its members do not have a shared ideology or are not susceptible to Al Qaeda's calls for action and propaganda.

Al Qaeda as an Ideology

Since the American invasion of Afghanistan, the routing of the Taliban and the dispersion of Al Qaeda, the organisation has been less able to execute effective attacks. The arrests of 3,000 Al Qaeda members, and one-third of its leadership, including top operational commanders, such as Abu Zubaydah, Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Abdullah al Rahim al-Nishiri, Ramzi bin Al Shibh, and Tawfiq bin Attash, have been serious blows. Indeed, bin Laden's October 2002 statement that Al Qaeda would begin targeting American economic interests, "the nodes of your economy" in his words, was indicative of a weakened organisation, less able to carry out massive, highly coordinated attacks against hardened and symbolic targets. The arrests, loss of training camps, and the increased surveillance and pressure by governments has made Al Qaeda a less potent adversary. Yet the organisation has shown a high degree of operational flexibility and leadership selection. Dispersed, it is a more formidable adversary. This is not to suggest that Al Qaeda has been defeated; it is biding its time, rebuilding its network. Al Qaeda attacks what it has the capabilities to attack at any given time. Al Qaeda is down but not out.

Moreover, the war in Iraq has angered many, especially Muslims in Southeast Asia, who already viewed the war on terror as being patently anti-Muslim. The United States is no longer perceived in the region as a benign hegemon, but as an aggressive and imperialist state. People are angry at American hypocrisy and unilateral actions. The swift victory over Iraq instilled a greater sense of humiliation on the part of Muslims. The lesson, for Muslim militants the world over, is this: no state can confront the United States with any chance of winning. The only way that the United States can be made

to "taste" the humiliation and injustice that Muslims the world over feel, is through terrorism.

This leads to another possibility, and one that is quite alarming; that Al Qaeda is being transformed from an organisation to an ideology. Are we missing the point by focusing so much on Al Qaeda the organisation? It was always a fluid organisation, with some 40 constituent groups and tactical allies.

Al Qaeda represented a new kind of terrorism: not a secular or ideologically based organisation that had limited political goals. Al Qaeda was truly a global network. Will the organisation transform itself into something new? Will arms of Al Qaeda metastasise into their own networks? Invention is difficult, but replicating and improving on an idea is far easier. Could Al Qaeda become an ideology in Southeast Asia? The answer is a disturbing "yes".

The first place we should start is for security specialists, journalists and academics to go back and revisit the sectarian conflicts in the Malukus and Sulawesi. This was a generation's Afghanistan. Although it will never have the religious and political symbolism of the Afghan *jihad*, it was their *jihad*, their first taste of blood, of war in God's name. It was the formative experience of their life. There were some 4,000 people who fought in the Malukus and Poso (3,000 Laskar Jihad and approximately 1,000 Laskar Mujahidin and Laskar Jundullah). That is four times the number of all Southeast Asians who fought against the Soviets. Where are they now? Are they setting up their own radical *madrasahs*? Recruiting? Preparing for their next *jihad*? Forming networks and trans-border alliances? This group of individuals is a potential time bomb. I find it thoroughly disturbing that the MMI, an overt civil society organisation, is distributing books on guerilla warfare and translations of Sheikh Abdullah Azzam's memoir of the Afghan *jihad*.

But Al Qaeda can be an ideology for individuals in the region as a whole. Osama bin Laden has become a romanticised figure. Although few Indonesians support his means, or even his ends, most believe that he is a brave man, a defender of Muslim causes. Moreover, with the economies in the region still not fully recovered from the Asian financial crisis, the socio-economic conditions for recruitment into radical groups exist. Poverty does not cause terrorism, but it does provide the conditions for it to spread. With some 40 million un-employed Indonesians alone, not to mention all the under-employed persons, radical groups will find fertile ground for recruiting.

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East, a world away from Southeast Asia, has become a metaphor for injustice in the region, and has led to virulent anti-Americanism in some regional strata. The war in Iraq and America's long-term occupation of an Arab state has become the final confirmation for many

Muslims in Southeast Asia that the Americans really are fighting Islam, not terrorism or proliferation, especially as they juxtapose Washington's response to North Korea's weapons of mass destruction programme. Popular antipathy towards America, especially in the run up to an electoral year in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, will put pressure on states to curtail cooperation with the United States in the war on terror. War against Iraq, in other words would lead to a growth in popular support for radical Muslim causes, diminish support on behalf of secular nationalists for America, and potentially lead to less cooperation by regional governments in counter-terrorism efforts.

Conclusion

Al Qaeda's success in Southeast Asia was not just in setting up a number of cells, but their ability to graft onto or co-opt indigenous groups and radicals, or form strong working alliances. In addition, and perhaps its lasting legacy, is that Al Qaeda has inspired a new generation of Muslim radicals. Al Qaeda is "morphing" into an ideology; it has paved the way and shown what is possible. It has proven that a sub-state actor can effectively challenge a secular state.

Following its establishment in 1994, Jemaah Islamiyah was at Al Qaeda's disposal: arranging meetings, setting up front companies, opening accounts, recruiting and training. Only after it developed the independent capability to plan and execute attacks, in 2000, can JI really be considered to have become a terrorist organisation in its own right. Even so, there still seems to be a high degree of coordination between the two. This is not to say that JI does not have its own interests. It is clear however, that JI benefited from linking its own revolution to the radical Islamist mainstream.

Southeast Asia is still home to very secular and moderate Muslims, who eschew the violence and radicalism associated with Al Qaeda and other Middle-Eastern and South Asian militant groups. But the number of those Muslims who have a similar worldview, sense of injustice and intolerance, and conviction that a militant *jihad* is necessary to bring about their social, political and economic vision is growing steadily. Islam, across the region, long marginalised, is becoming more politicised. Al Qaeda, in its current form, or as it develops, will continue to find fertile ground in the region.

Notes

1. Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003).

2. John Arquilla, David Ronfeldt and Michele Zanini, "Networks, Netwar and Information-Age Terrorism", in Ian O. Lesser *et al.*, *Countering the New Terrorism* (Washington: Rand Corporation, 1999), p. 49.
3. Arquilla *et al.*, "Networks, Netwar and Information-Age Terrorism", p. 51.
4. Phil Hirschkorn, Rohan Gunaratna, Ed Blanche, and Stefan Leader, "Blowback", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Special Report, Vol. 13, No. 8 (1 August 2001), available at <www.mwarrior.com/alqaeda.htm>.
5. Arquilla *et al.*, "Networks, Netwar and Information-Age Terrorism", p. 61.
6. Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc: Inside the Secret World of Osama bin Laden* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2001), p. 56.
7. Muslims are required to pay 2.5 percent of their income in *zakat* (alms) each year. It is estimated that $1.6 million per day is donated by wealthy Saudis alone. During the war against the Soviets, the Saudis established three charities, the Islamic International Relief Organisation, the al Haramain Foundation and the Islamic Relief Agency. Al Qaeda has established many more since then. Mark Huband, "Bankrolling Bin Laden", *The Financial Times*, 28 November 2001.
8. Jeff Garth and Judith Miller, "Threats and Responses: The Money Trail", *The New York Times*, 28 November 2002.
9. The President of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth is Sheikh Saleh al-Sheikh, the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs. He is also the "superintendent of all foundation activities for al Haramain". In March 2002, the United States froze the accounts of al Haramain's offices in Bosnia and Somalia. The Bosnian branch was re-opened in August 2002 under Saudi Pressure. See Matthew Levitt, "Combating Terrorist Financing, Despite the Saudis", Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Watch No. 673, 1 November 2002.
10. The IIRO was established in 1978 in Saudi Arabia as a non-governmental humanitarian organisation. It has more than 30 offices, and its activities cover more than 75 countries in different parts of the world. It was used extensively by Saudi Arabian intelligence services to channel Saudi, American and Gulf-state funding to the Afghan Mujahidin from 1979–1989.
11. Zubair, chairman of the IRIC, immigrated to the Philippines in 1985 and married a local convert to Islam, Shedha Enriquez. Abu Omar, Khalifa's brother-in-law, started working at the IRIC in 1993, first as a "volunteer", and becoming its director in 1994. Zubair was described by Philippine intelligence as Khalifa's "business partner".
12. Philippine National Police, *After Intelligence Operations Report* (no date).
13. Mark Lander, "US Advisors May Aid Philippine Anti-Terror Effort", *The New York Times*, 11 October 2001, B4.
14. Christine Herrera, "Bin Laden Funds Abu Sayyaf Through Muslim Relief Group", *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 9 August 2000.
15. Herrera, "Bin Laden Funds Abu Sayyaf Through Muslim Relief Group."
16. Herrera, "Bin Laden Funds Abu Sayyaf Through Muslim Relief Group."

17. "Full Text of Palace Letter to the *New York Times*", *PDI*, 12 October 2001.
18. Interview with a Major in the Intelligence Service-Armed Forces of the Philippines, Camp Aguinaldao, Quezon City, 24 January 2002.
19. Interview with a Colonel in the Philippine National Police, Malate, 25 June 2002.
20. The Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) is one of Indonesia's most important Islamic social organisations. It was founded in February 1967.
21. Interview with Dr. H. Asep R. Jayanegara, Secretary, Komite Penanggulangan Krisis, Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, Jakarta, 8 January 2003.
22. Dwikarna was also the head of the DDII, South Sulawesi branch. DDII founded KOMPAK (the Committee to Alleviate the Impact of Crisis). KOMPAK had very close ties with the Saudi Charity Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (MER-C). Omar Al-Faruq admitted to sending large amounts of aid through KOMPAK to Ambon and Poso.
23. BIN Interrogation Report of Omar Al-Faruq (June 2002). The office was in Makassar, Sulawesi.
24. Dwikarna, a civil engineer, admitted to being 4th in command of the MMI in Indonesia. In addition, he admitted to being a member of Laskar Jundullah and a chapter head of DDII. Linrung also admitted to being a member of the DDII. He was the former treasurer of the National Mandate Party (PAN) before quitting the post in January 2002. The DDII is linked to the former ruling Golkar party.
25. Faruq organised training for the Laskar Jundullah at WAFA facilities and then at the Hidyatullah Islamic school, both in Kalimantan.
26. Yazid Sufaat's Kuala Lumpur apartment was used by the 11 senior Al Qaeda lieutenants, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Ramzi Bin al-Shibh, Hambali, Khalid al-Midhar, Nawaq al-Hazmi, Hikmat Shakir and Tawfiq bin Attash, in January 2000 who met to plan the attacks on the USS Cole and 11 September hijackings.
27. The complete board included: Wali Khan Amin Shah, Medhat Abdul Salam Shabana, Riduan Isamudin (Hambali), Hemeid H. Alghamdi, Noralwizah Lee Abdullah (Hambali's wife), Amein Mohammed, Amein Alsanani (Managing Director), and Annamalai A/L Sundrasan (Secretary).
28. PNP, *After Intelligence Operations Report.*
29. There Moussaoui hoped to enter flight school, but was disappointed when he could not receive jumbo jet training and decided to go to America for training. He was arrested in August 2001, and is currently the only person in the United States being tried for the September 11 attack. See, "The Trail to Kuala Lumpur", *The Straits Times*, 29 January 2002.
30. Canadian Security and Intelligence Service, "Interrogation Report of Mohammed Mansour Jabarah".
31. Malaysiakini, "Ex-Army Officer Detained Under the ISA", 25 February 2003; Malaysiakini, "ISA Arrest of Ex-Colonel Must be in Good Faith—Sukham", 27 February 2003; also see <abimjohor.org.my/kbi.htm>.

32. The firm was capitalized with RM$300,000. The shares were distributed as follows: Abdul Manaf Kasmuri — 83,999 shares (24 percent), Faiz bin Abu Bakar Bafana — 83,999 shares (28 percent), Zulkifli Marzuki — 72,000 shares (28 percent), and Shaharudin Othman — 60,000 shares (20 percent). I have no evidence that Othman is a member of Jemaah Islamiyah. There is evidence that the firm had been effectively dormant for the past two years.
33. Kavi Chongkittavorn, "Al Qaeda in Thailand: Fact or Fiction?", *The Nation*, 13 January 2003.
34. Ministry of Home Affairs, *White Paper: The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Treat of Terrorism* (Singapore, 2003), p. 6.
35. Wong Chun Wai and Lourdes Charles, "Terror Suspect Awarded Pipe Project", *The Star*, 1 January 2003.
36. Patrick Sennyah, Ainon Mohd and Hayati Hayatudin, "KMM's Opposition Link", *The New Straits Times*, 12 October 2001.
37. Romesh Ratnesar, "Confessions of an Al Qaeda Terrorist", *Time*, 16 September 2002; BIN Interrogation Report of Omar Al-Faruq (June 2002).
38. Haris was a veteran of the Afghan Mujahidin, and the head of Abu Jibril's Laskar Mujahidin forces in the Malukus.
39. Alex Perry, "Deadly Cargo", *Time Asia*, 21 October 2002.
40. Bertil Lintner, "A Recipe for Trouble", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 April 2002, p. 17; and Lintner, "A Cocoon of Terror", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 April 2002, pp. 14–17.
41. Bertil Lintner, "Championing Islamist Extremism", *South Asia Intelligence Review*, Vol. 1, No. 9 (16 September 2002).
42. Perry, "Deadly Cargo".
43. Romesh Ratnesar, "Confessions of an Al Qaeda Terrorist", *Time*, 16 September 2002; BIN Interrogation Report of Omar Al-Faruq (June 2002).
44. Dan Murphy, "Indonesia's Far-Flung 'Holy War' ", *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 August 2000.
45. "Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku", International Crisis Group (ICG) Asia Report No. 10 (December 2000).
46. "Waiting for Osama's Blessing", *Tempo*, 18–24 September 2001.
47. Available at <www.laskarjihad.org>.
48. Warren Caragata, "Radical Blasts", *AsiaWeek.com*, 5 October 2001, available at <www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/magazine/dateline/0,8782,176575,00.html>.
49. Interview with Jafar Umar Thalib, Jakarta, 10 January 2002.

III. *The Media Factor*

Chapter 7

The Globalised Media and Southeast Asia: Boon or Bane?

Jonathan Woodier

> Let men communicate their thoughts with freedom, and their indignation fly off like a fire spread on the surface; like gunpowder scattered, they kindle, they communicate; but the explosion is neither loud nor dangerous: keep them under restraint, it is subterranean fire, whose agitation is unseen until it bursts into earthquake or volcano.
>
> The Celebrated Speech of the Hon. T. Erskine in support of the Liberty of the Press, Edinburgh, 1973

Introduction

In November 2003, the Indonesian parliament was considering a broadcast law, which proposed the limitation of foreign programmes and allowed for the establishment of a new censorship board. According to those writing it, the new legislation was aimed at tackling biased reporting of Indonesia and the promotion of Western viewpoints, at the heart of which is Indonesia's image in the international media as a haven for Islamic militants and terrorists.

The move came amidst renewed attempts by governments across the region to stem the flow of news and entertainment products in the media. Southeast Asia's elites are showing renewed determination to secure their hold on the

"modern machinery of memory",[1] in the face of the growing impact of the cross-border, mass communication media in the Asian region and beyond. It is an important indication that local elites know they have a battle on their hands when it comes to controlling the flow of information across and within their borders and, perhaps, as a consequence, maintaining their grip on power.

While concerns over the foreign media are central to these efforts, the accusing finger could be pointing in the wrong direction. The international media is a convenient scapegoat for internal instability and growing social problems, but the real threat comes from the local use of modern, disruptive communications technology that allows groups to organise and challenge established authority.

As Southeast Asia is trying to make sense of globalisation in its current manifestation — a blend of modernity and speed — its societies are grappling with issues of governance, the shape of institutions like the media, and the possible ramifications of some of globalisation's general trappings that are seen to be Western: reactionary, decadent and deceitful. It has led to a tremendous richness in variety of response but, as the region's role in America's war on terror shows, it is a struggle it may be losing in the face of change, conflict and imminent breakdown.

This essay will examine the growing role of the media in Southeast Asia, the nature of the media and the industry trends that are affecting it. It will take a look at the international media in Southeast Asia and its correspondents, how they report on the region, and the industry trends that impact their output. It will also address the wider ramifications of the globalised media industry, and the use of communications technology that makes the Information Age a reality.

The Media in Southeast Asia

> The threat to independence in the late twentieth century from the new electronics could be greater than was colonialism itself. We are beginning to learn that de-colonisation was not the termination of imperial relationships but merely the extending of a geo-political web which has been spinning since the Renaissance. The new media have the power to penetrate more deeply into a receiving culture than any previous manifestation of Western technology.[2]

Technological developments and the current round of global economic integration have ensured that the mass communication media and its connected apparatus have become increasingly central in our daily lives. From satellite

television and financial data screens to "emoticons" and mobile text messaging, it is the veins and sinews that give flesh to this new economic reality, providing a nudge to "the intensification of world-wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa".[3] With information racing around the world at "Netspeed",[4] perhaps governments, even cultures, are right to feel threatened by the disenchantment of their world the end of the "Age of Deference".

Fanned by the winds of change in telecommunications technology, there has been an explosion of news and entertainment products as satellite and cable carry their digital payload around the region, bursting across increasingly porous national borders, and bombarding a growing local audience. Ten years ago, there were only a few million cable-television households in the Asia-Pacific. Today, there are 182 million.[5] News Corp-owned satellite broadcaster Star TV, pumps out 40 channels in eight languages to, it claims, 300 million viewers in 53 countries.[6]

Despite a double-digit decline in advertising in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, which forced many media companies in Southeast Asia, either to reorganise or close down operations completely,[7] the latest research indicates that the Asia-Pacific media and entertainment market continues to grow, and could be worth more than US$192 billion by 2006.[8]

At the heart of this growth is television. Despite being condemned by its critics as "ephemeral, sensational, over dramatic, simplistic, lacking in depth and interpretation",[9] television dominates media consumption in the Asia-Pacific, where it is "immense, affecting the most basic assumptions and practices of daily life".[10] Southeast Asians watch more than twice as much television as they read print media, with Thailand topping the TV charts with an average of 3.2 hours of television viewing a day. Daily television consumption in the Philippines is 2.8 hours, slightly higher than Singapore and Malaysia at around 2.5 hours.[11] Half of all television homes are now in Asia, and the number is growing four times faster than in the rest of the world.[12]

Information was once the jealously protected ward of the local elites. Today, however, given the mass communication media's central role in nation building, the international media giants, seeking profitability through scale, have taken their place alongside local producers. They have extended their reach across Asia, and compete for a growing audience and regional advertising revenues expected to reach almost US$90 billion by 2006.[13] Monolithic state ownership has been eroded, and there is an apparent profusion of choice and proprietorship. This "concentration of media capital through competition",[14]

looks set to continue, conjuring up numbers that leave the nation state wondering how long it can maintain its relevance.[15]

A Globalised Media: "la trahaison des clercs"

> Tickle the public, make 'em grin,
> the more you tickle the more you'll win.
>
> 19th century English rhyme

Those concerned with the impact of the globalised media will have their worries compounded by current industry trends. As the media and entertainment industry has grown and major media organisations extend their global reach, the tendency toward commodification, commercialisation and the concentration of ownership has intensified, fuelled by deregulation and technological development.

Consolidation has been a key characteristic of an industry where size does matter. The winners in the new entertainment reality will be the big companies that have the economic power to make the huge, increasingly expensive movies that the crowds prefer, that are best positioned to distribute and promote their content, and can easily stand out from the crowd.[16]

Growth in size has not appeared to mean an increase in quality of content and programming. Wherever you look in the communication media today, there is a feeling that content has become dumber and weaker as a pragmatic choice of publishers and broadcasters who have consciously selected quantity of readers over quality of content. Content looks formulaic, driven by audience research, enslaved to populism and the "dull conformity" of sensationalism.[17]

Editorial decisions in newsrooms seem to be made on the premise all too familiar in the television world: "B.L.T". — bright, light and trite, as "more emphasis is placed on entertainment, show business, scandal and prurience, at the expense of more serious, challenging material like current affairs, policy issues, or foreign affairs".[18]

A market driven media narrows the scope of what it is possible to say publicly — appealing only to "those tastes that show the largest profit",[19] and advertising "encourages a general shift away from diversity of coverage towards the packaging of 'product lines' into 'light entertainment' ".[20]

The "tabloids" are not a new phenomenon. They have been with us since before London's Jack the Ripper excited them in the 19th century. What is changing in today's profit driven media industry, is that even "quality" products are moving down market, trying to build an audience. This move has been given a helping hand by the relaxation of regulatory regimes which once

laid down strict criteria for balance of programming on commercial channels, the increasing power of advertisers to determine nature of editorial content and the extension of commercial or corporate values to the media, partly through the influence of public relations. As television heads in this direction, other commercial media like print are forced to follow suit in order to remain competitive.

Programming and editorial decisions are increasingly based on market research. In a world where the popular mantras revolve around branding, product placement and packaging, programming is particularly driven by a focus-group mentality. Technological change and the proliferation of media outlets is transforming deadlines and altering the logistics of the communications media, putting journalists on a production line of content delivery. They are caught up in a seemingly never-ending circle of self promotion, cross promotion and product promotion, increasing the reliance on secondary sources like the PR profession, and changing the way stories are covered, the way they evolve, and the way they are delivered.

The expanding transnational entertainment companies with news divisions are finding new synergies present the problem of how much a company should cover stories about itself. "Satellite slush"[21] is the easy option, as companies from Disney's ABC News to Rupert Murdoch's Star TV make their position clear: when serious news threatens to muddy otherwise clear commercial waters, the pursuit of profit always takes first place.

The French call it "la trahaison des clercs" (the betrayal of the clerks). Privileged and well-educated people cynically producing and revelling in the lowest common denominator populism, which helpfully diverts the public from challenging a status quo that the "clerks" are more than happy to see unchallenged. For the media giants, it results in "news without facts, fame without achievement and glamour without substance . . . socially disengaged, culturally uninterested, intellectually understretched. In short, tragically flippant".[22]

Of course there are no reasons why news and current affairs should be immune from the general trends within the industry. Even in the once hallowed halls of British television, producers say they are under pressure to create exciting, controversial or entertaining programmes, even if that means distorting the truth or misrepresenting views.[23] Yet, in a mediated world, the news media gains particular importance as the "pivot between the rulers and the ruled."[24] After all, "to make sense of the world is to exert power over it, and to circulate that sense socially is to exert power over those who use that sense as a way of coping with their daily lives".[25]

Television

> Television continues to enjoy a robust hold on the popular imagination: there are few social phenomena, pernicious or benign, for which television is not being held responsible by someone or other: the stifling of children's imagination, the increase in obesity, the decline of the family meal, the erosion of morality, the vulgarisation of taste, the worship of celebrity, the promotion of violence, the undermining of authority, the maintenance of American hegemony — and the spread of democracy.[26]

Given the popularity of television in Asia, its particular limitations are cause for further alarm bells around the region. Television is particularly subject to industry trends, reinforcing its limitations as a medium that "is not about analysing . . . [but] about perceptions . . . ".[27] And, when it comes to the production of news and current affairs, those who supply it are increasingly bound to the technology, from live broadcasts to the satellite bookings that enable reporters to appear "in the field".

Yet television's influence is undisputed. Perhaps, the "most powerful cultural force since Gutenberg ran off the first printed copy of the Bible",[28] television has altered the reality of events. The division between the real and the image seems to be dissolving, as television focuses attention on events that are then changed by the presence of the camera. The way people behave and conduct themselves is televisual. From refugees crossing a border, through anti-globalisation protestors, to the participants of televised debates in parliament or "on camera" courtroom considerations, "had there been no television, [the event] would be different. Their reality [includes] their televisuality".[29]

The mass media as a whole has had a massive impact on the political process and political institutions, but television's influence has been most profound. Television has taken the political process and shaped it in its own image. It has altered the election practices of candidates and political parties, made elections television events and is even "replacing churches, political parties and trade unions as a means of forming and representing opinions".[30]

The sound bite, the hyperactive child of the television era, is playing directly to the limitations of the medium. Sculpted by the communications professional employed by the modern political party, it is a ". . . lethal result of vapid reaction units . . . a safe substitute for argument instead of a prelude to it . . . insulting the intelligence of voters, and encouraging them to tune out".[31]

As attention deficit syndrome becomes disorder *de rigeur* of the MTV generation, television has suffused the political process with the trends and

techniques of "political marketing".[32] From psychology and commercial advertising to opinion polls and political campaigning, the multimedia strategies employed to get politicians elected seem to "aim more and more overtly as forms of 'subliminal' persuasion".[33]

Reporting on Southeast Asia

It is within this context, then, that a reporter works. Even the best, and foreign correspondents have usually been among the best given that an overseas posting tends to be a plumb job, are limited by the technological and commercial realities which govern editorial choice.

Television reporters, in particular, are enslaved by technology and the increased commodification of news due to corporate control of news organisations and convergence. Deadlines from television news, current affairs, radio news, even on-line editions, plug the reporter into a wall of output rather than allowing them the freedom to investigate and develop their stories, and the cost of production and logistical demands determine what gets covered and how.

Satellite broadcast bookings, the demands from ever more hungry newsrooms and the celebrity of reporters, go hand in hand with cost cutting back at base. Resource constraints add to the pressures on those involved in the production process. From tape editors to copy editors, the young, the inexperienced and the overworked increasingly staff newsrooms. At the end of the day, as television is about pictures and emotions, only the most talented can use it to tell intricate stories. Most take the easy way out, merely using it as a colourful club to bludgeon their audiences into passive attention.

Then there are the filters back home, the editors and managers who have their eyes on the commercial realities of a newsroom. Headlines need to attract an audience, or nobody gets paid. And there has been a general lack of interest in foreign news — so almost all foreign reporting now (especially in the US and Britain) is an extension of domestic reporting. Most news organisations are dominated by "bean-counters who regard the cost of foreign news gathering as totally disproportionate to the return".[34]

And, whilst there has been a modest resurgence in interest as a result of September 11, the Bali Bombings and, most recently, the attack on the J. W. Marriot hotel in Jakarta, much of the coverage has focused on the stories that make for eye-catching headlines. As a result, there is still not much foreign copy beyond the big stories, and there is little to illuminate the values

and cultures of different countries — or attempts to put stories into perspective.[35]

In the next twenty years, it is likely that staff correspondents based abroad, whether for print or the electronic media, will continue to dwindle in number. Already "firemen" are the norm, big names "parachuted" into hot zones like Afghanistan, otherwise young freelancers are left to pick up the stories cheaply, and "... editors ... will become increasingly wary of stories from abroad which can't be checked, and routine foreign coverage will shrink still more".[36]

Of course, it is convenient to blame the media for all these failings. And yet, in the promotion of media and entertainment goods, the building of this audience is now as important as creating the product. Given the corresponding increase in the influence of the marketing department and the importance of audience research, it is clear that our media and entertainment products come to us "imbricated with theories of what we want".[37]

The Battle for Control

There is, clearly, something of a paradox here. Although many Southeast Asian governments might fear the links drawn by the modernisation theorists between capitalist market development, the free flow of information and the development of liberal institutions, their worries in this area are generally unfounded.[38] The elites in Southeast Asia regularly rail against the international media, but are proving they can respond fairly effectively, as they attempt to retain control over, or manipulate the flow of information flooding across their borders.[39]

Rather than inspiring democratic ideals in an informed and educated public, the media tends to be locked in its own battle of competing interests, only very occasionally reflecting the political aspirations of its audience and their call for political change, rarely sowing the seeds of political conflict.[40] One only has to look at the competition for access to the China market to see that these media giants are not here to fight for democracy, they have "other priorities such as entertaining the people and making money".[41]

This does not mean that the mass media, together with the technological developments down the wires of which it flows, will not have a huge impact on politics in Southeast Asia. As with much of the rest of the world, the communication media, as well as the perception industries so closely connected with it, are altering the very nature of politics and the ways in which political leaders relate to those over whom they rule, such that the "management of

visibility and self-presentation through the media [is becoming] an integral and increasingly professional feature of government".[42]

It is, however, the depth and pace of the changes swept in by a cultural firestorm, presaged in part by the explosion in the number and reach of international media products, that has many governments in the region in damage limitation mode. The wider they open the doors to their economies in an attempt to reap some of the financial benefits of being part of the global information economy, the more they seem to fan the flames of modernity that are licking at the social and political foundations of their societies. The avalanche of informational and entertainment materials bursting through increasingly flimsy national borders over the global communications system is perceived by many on the receiving end as threatening, politically and culturally, and critically connected to issues of sovereignty and the activities of transnational companies.[43]

Despite the widely held fears of "the destruction of traditional culture and values (under the code of modernisation), and [the imposition of] a new kind of transnational, global consumer culture . . . ",[44] the media is not simply an avenue down which march the imperial legions of cultural change.[45] But, even though the transnational content providers might be careful to ensure political pitfalls do not pepper their path to profits, these are still products that come with a built-in slant.

As public spaces in cities around Asia see a proliferation of skateboard-wielding youths in their baseball caps and baggies, it is clear that the message from the global media giants is McWorld and definitely not *jihad*.[46] However, in the converging currents of media reception it is not a matter of McWorld or *jihad*; a member of Jemaah Islamiyah is just as likely to pick up a McDonalds, while the Burqhua often hides a Nike "swoosh". After all, media production and reception is a process of "constant negotiation".[47] These are disruptive technologies, and their role in cultural transformation is both complicated and unpredictable.[48] Audiences take what they want, and discard the rest. Thus, while the media can be used to extend and consolidate traditional values, nourishing a sense of identity and sense of belonging, it can, equally, play a more unpredictable role.[49]

Despite the unbalanced flow of information and the unequal distribution of the products, challenges to traditional forms of power and authority have also emerged in a "complex syncopation of voices",[50] as the audience becomes less constrained by the precedents of tradition. Thus information technology, from video machines to mobile text messaging, can serve to "shake dominant political visions and cultural traditions to the core".[51]

Smaller groups in the community have found their voice in the face of the persuasive influence of the Coca-Cola culture.[52] There is a high-tech mobilisation of radical constituencies,[53] whose voices often speak in opposition to globalisation, fed by "its major discontents, nationalism, regionalism, localism and revivalism",[54] challenging the authority of the centre.

Indeed, mirroring the most effective global corporations, Al Qaeda uses modern communications technology to create a "'virtual' entity that leverages local assets — hence local knowledge — to full advantage in co-ordinating attacks in many fields of jihad".[55]

Information technology can have a specific value in enabling a terrorist attack: Mohammed Atta, while awaiting takeoff on American Airlines Flight 11, used a cell phone to keep in touch with his troops; the Bali bombs were detonated by mobile phone. And, in a wider role, the use of ever-cheaper, ever-more-powerful information technologies to mobilise constituencies, from Al Qaeda's recruitment videos[56], to the new, unregulated satellite TV channels — notably Al Jazeera, founded in 1996 — information technology has enabled alternative channels of communication in the propaganda war between the US and Al Qaeda. The uncomfortable fact is that a free press often "fuels antagonisms because people choose channels that bolster their biases".[57]

Culture, therefore, has become a new factor in both national security and international relations.[58] However ambiguous its influence and flimsy its connections with democracy, the communication media, and its electronic forms in particular, are seen as extending their fingers of influence into the national political sphere in various ways.

The spread of the communication media and a perceived loss of state control over the "technologies of social circulation",[59] with which the region's elites promote and defend their interests, has heightened the security dilemmas of Southeast Asia's elites.[60] The global communication media is identified as an important cause of regional political upheaval,[61] and local governments have been preoccupied with bringing the communication media back into line and stemming the flow of material deemed damaging to the interests of incumbent regimes.

The Rise of Internet Opposition: The Battle Continues

This battle for control has been renewed with vigour in the early years of the new century. There have been some obvious successes in attempts to reassert control over the flow of news and information using well-worn methods like commercial influence and legal controls, as well as new strategies like attempts

to dilute the unacceptable with uncontroversial competition. Where content is more contentious, it tends to be mired in the sensational and the salacious, as with Thailand's tabloid press. Either way, it can be seen as serving the interests of those who wish to limit serious discussion.

But the growth of the Internet in the 1990s has really complicated Southeast Asia's government efforts to control the flow of information. US government moves to establish the information superhighway marked an upping of the ante in the competition to be a winner in the global economy.[62] In response, governments across the region have tried to put the Internet to use in developing their economies, as falling costs mean access has become a reality for many in the region's more developed areas.[63]

Despite the possible economic advantages, the perceived political implications of embracing the information age remain a concern to governments around the region. New media allow those on the periphery to develop and consolidate power and, ultimately, to challenge the authority of the centre. Even Singapore, a model for control and constraint in the region, appears to be loosening its grip in the face of recent technological developments, in particular, the growth of the Internet. The leadership of the seemingly indomitable ruling Peoples Action Party (PAP), recently threw up its hands, exclaiming that its sway over the communication media was slipping.[64]

However, where Southeast Asia is concerned, Singapore is leading the way in successfully placing "strict restrictions on the flow or market exchange"[65] of information related commodities and related cultural products such as news, movies and television programmes. Even in the Information Economy, the island state has continued to compete at the highest levels.

From the government's "intelligent island" initiative,[66] to more recent e-initiatives (including the S$1.5-billion Infocomm 21, www.ida.com.sg), the government has sought to exploit information technology for economic growth, while working to maintain its position as gatekeeper for information and media access for its citizens. It has one of the highest computer and Internet penetration rates in the world with about 60 percent of households equipped with a P.C.,[67] and Internet users growing from 240,000 in 1996 to more than 1,940,000 in 2001.[68] It has also led the way in the region in working to control this new source of instability and dissent.

By wiring up Singapore for broadband Internet access, and creating an Internet portal delivering interactive, multimedia applications and services to homes, businesses and schools throughout the Republic, the government has moved to secure its gate-keeping role over the flow of information across and within its border.[69] It is a position it has been prepared to reinforce

with jaunts into local hardware, as when Singapore's internal security agency secretly scanned 200,000 computers to trace a virus allowing hackers to steal computer passwords and credit card numbers.[70] Some analysts also suggest that there exists a policy of state surveillance and sporadic intimidation that encourages self-censorship.[71]

On the legal front, the passage of the 1997 Internet Code of Practice also meant the government could outlaw vast sections of the Internet on the grounds of "public interest, public morality, public order, public security (or) national harmony", including content that "advocates homosexuality or lesbianism", and material that "glorifies" ethnic, racial or religious intolerance. Singapore's defamation laws also remain an important part of the government's legal arsenal, and a way, according to the government, to defend its reputation and contribute to social stability.[72]

But, even in Singapore, the Internet is providing additional and less controllable space for political expression not necessarily sanctioned by the government. While the established local media and their international brethren know their place, globalisation and rapid progress in mass communications technologies, like the Internet, have provided "opportunities for communication among civil society groups on a scale and in a way which had not been possible before . . . ".[73]

There are discussions groups like those of the new Sintercom — housed on servers outside Singapore but, until recently, a poor relation to the original which shut down in the face of the government's Internet regulations, Delphi.com at the rather risqué Sammyboy.com, the Think Centre and sites set up by opposition parties, as well as the often ridiculous Talkingcock.com.

The criminal defamation investigation launched in July 2002 against Muslim rights activist Zulfikar Mohamad Shariff, was a clear move by the government to maintain control over the Internet space. It was also an indication that any commitment to deregulating Singapore's media and entertainment industry is more about securing the wandering attention of Singapore's youth than a move towards a more pluralist system.[74]

However, despite the hardening of attitudes towards the new media throughout the region, it is unlikely that the "larger, more diverse political systems will not be able to simply replicate a Singapore model of control".[75] This would require "the development of a mutually reinforcing set of institutions comprehensively subordinated to ruling party interests".[76] And yet, the Singapore model, despite its obvious problems, continues to inspire, inform and guide authoritarian regimes in the region, particularly in the wake of 9/11 and the Bali Bombings.

A Future for the Authoritarian Model?

The Singapore government is finding there are drawbacks to its approach. The government recognises that its attempts to create an entrepreneurial culture to compete on the global economic stage are being stifled by what some economists describe as an aura of "authoritarian capitalism", which "... suppresses individualism and intellectual freedom and will greatly impair the formation of entrepreneurs ... [and] in the long run ... is unlikely to sustain the levels of high performance recorded in recent years".[77]

And, events post-9/11, indicate that the government needs to allow more critical engagement with issues that are threatening regime continuity around the region, in particular the challenge militant Islam represents to stability in Pacific Asia. The limited coverage of alternative perspectives by the mass media, partly because of their preparedness to bow to local controls and partly because of a process of dumbing down, clearly played a role in the failure of both Singapore and neighbour Malaysia to recognise the extent of the coherence and cohesion of the politically radicalised Islamic opposition in their own backyard.[78]

Despite this, governments around the region seem increasingly reluctant to trust their citizens with a more plural system. Indeed, the American war against terror has provided a useful excuse for cementing over some of these cracks. In the post-9/11 world, this attitude might find some support from the most unlikely quarters.[79]

"Asian values" were once the talisman used by governments around the region to ward off what they saw as the worst effects of globalisation — the move towards liberal democracy and the undermining of its authority. Today, the attacks on the US and the global financial fallout from both the telecommunications stock price meltdown and the Enron-inspired corporate scandals have tested the commitment of even the strongest proponents of globalisation. With many in the West now leery of its ramifications, the war on terror is reinforcing the garrison-state mentality, providing a fillip to authoritarianism and hindering the global, open media policies of the 1990s.

Indeed, with memories still vivid of the chaos that infected their post-independence years, many of the stalwart burghers of Southeast Asia seem all too happy to allow their rulers to draw an increasingly ambiguous line between liberty and safety. Whether they can provide the security their citizenry so desperately desire remains to be seen. Few outside the region have much confidence that ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) will step up to the breach, given that regional co-operation in countering terrorism in the

past has "not been well co-ordinated and has continued to be ad hoc due to the constraints of conflicting national interests and mutual suspicions".[80]

What is clear, however, is the challenges to the region's governments are increasing. Rapid technological change in areas such as the development of broadband telecommunication services in East Asia is leading to more "complex bargaining relationships",[81] between global companies, local firms, citizens and their national governments. Around the region, "new responses to these technologies will be and are being crafted not only by the state, but also the media and society".[82] But, any liberalisation of freedom of expression tends to be driven from above, and "democratisation thus involves the expansion of political participation and consultation within the limits defined by the state . . . ".[83]

Most of the region's governments seem inflexible on this point, even though their embrace of globalisation has given rise to disillusioned groups which clearly believe their only resort is "a rabid response to colonialism and imperialism and their economic children, capitalism and modernity".[84] Control remains the governmental strategy of choice — even if it is a flawed one.

Conclusion

To be sure, Western reporting of the terror threat in Southeast Asia is often unintelligent, simplistic, and sensational. It often lacks perspective and proportion, but it must be remembered that the mass media, as a whole, is increasingly a commercial medium, driven by the need to entertain, rather than to educate and inform.

The mass communication media is subject to trends that are limiting the space available for sophisticated analysis and discussion. Much of the blame for this must be put on audiences that lap up the pabulum the industry provides.

Locally, the media industry is no better. It is obsessed with the graphic depiction of violent struggle, intent in its reinforcement of Southeast Asia's "fortress mentality". To this mix, it is keen to add to sex and celebrity in a further attempt to drive profits.

This is not merely an international problem. Indeed, the international media is all too prepared to "work adjustments at the editorial levels in an attempt to advance broader commercial interests".[85] Relentless commercialisation drives the media towards a diet of reality television and tabloid journalism, compounding the tendency for personality to be elevated over the professional, image over discourse, style over substance and simplicity over complexity.[86]

And yet, to seek to blame the communication media, foreign or local, for the region's problems is short sighted. All too often, the calls for a more responsible media are made by those who are more concerned to stymie freedom of expression in order to silence their critics and protect vested interests. Southeast Asia is an island under siege by the forces of change swirling around a globalised world. The steady drip of digital information threatens to work apart the bricks in the barricades erected by the local elites. Although any developmental position that freedom and democracy will take their natural course seems over optimistic, the communication media is playing a central role in conveying the agents of this change into the heart of the region.

It is clear that local elites are not without response. Indeed, across Southeast Asia, there are distinct and richly diverse regional reactions to the perceived problem of the globalisation of the media. But, in the Information Age, governments in the region and beyond are being faced with major questions on issues of social cohesion and stability, national sovereignty, cultural imperialism and the future of local cultural products, as much as the development of democratic pluralism.

Those who hope to silence opposition, will find a kindred spirit in the Bush Administration that "... prefers prayers to politics, avoiding at all costs debate, both within its own ranks and in the public arena ... silence and secrecy, punctuated with disingenuousness consistently its preferred *modus operandi*".[87] Thus the war against terror gives all authoritarian governments renewed hope that they can successfully have economic growth without recourse to democratic pluralism. They can round up their opponents with impunity, and sandbag those barricades in the hope they might last out a little longer against the floods.

But, the Internet has increased the available media space and access is still relatively cheap, hence it is an environment where challenges to potentially corroding centres of control can be mounted.[88] Other communications technologies, from video to text messaging, play a similar role. And, despite the ambiguity of the relationship between the media and democracy, there would seem to be links between the increased flow of information and entertainment products into Southeast Asia, the struggle between ideas of the traditional and of the modern, and pressures for change in the region.

Any attempts to tighten the grip on the flow of information and stifle dissent in the region will make it more likely that undercurrents of opinion in society go unrecognised. Ensuring there are fewer avenues for the articulation of peaceful opposition, will merely serve to increase radicalism, and thrust the dissolute, disillusioned and disenfranchised into the arms of violent factions.

Local anger is joining global hate, whispered in the plotting and scheming, etched on the bullets of resistance, and echoing in the blast of bombs from Bali to Jakarta, and "Southeast Asian governments have been floundering in the face of these threats".[89]

As the World Bank recently wrote, "The freedom of information has too frequently become a casualty of the so-called war against terrorism, with numerous governments taking initiatives to restrict it in the name of national interest . . . [but], . . . it is important to remember that while the media acts as a catalyst for change and growth in societies, free press and economic strength are linked."

Despite a modern media culture that is "omnivorous in its consumption of idealism, and masterful in its substitution of lesser gods"[90], a free press still performs an important function as a watchdog by exposing corruption, checking public policy and watching those who govern. Further, it allows for a diversity of opinion in the mainstream and contributes to human development by bringing health and education information to its audience. After all, "people with more information are empowered to make better choices." [91]

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Chapter 8

Evaluating Western Media Perceptions of Thailand After the Bali Bombing

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Western media perceptions of Southeast Asia after the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002 have been driven by a combination of factors. The most influential one is the fierce competition among the top media establishments to be the frontrunner in reporting the war on terrorism, especially those related to activities of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Al Qaeda terrorist groups. After the 11 September 2001 attacks, the Western media expended additional resources to provide comprehensive coverage on the terrorist attacks, on the war in Afghanistan and on related military, political and social issues. Some Western media such as Cable News Network (CNN), *The New York Times*, *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, *Time*, *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek* have either strengthened their news bureaus or sharpened their focus on terrorism. To maintain the Western, especially American, attention span, the Western media have constantly been searching for new angles and leads that would help explain the post-September 11 developments. With constant reports on terrorism, the Western media have helped set an agenda for the Southeast Asian media, Thailand in particular, as well as policy makers in the region.

After the September 11 attacks and the toppling of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, Western reports gradually shifted their attention away from Southwest Asia to Southeast Asia, and fittingly called the latter the

second front in the war against terrorism. Operations began in the southern Philippines shortly after the attacks in the US. The arrests of key terrorist operatives linked to Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia including Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, Yazid Sufaat, and other members also helped to shed light on the scope of the international terrorist network in the region and their alleged plans for future attacks. Since then, the Western media have followed this lead vigorously. The Bali bombings confirmed the reality of the terrorist threat and this inevitably attracted "news hounds" from the West.

Western correspondents quoted intelligence sources and scholars, and also visited the region to secure insights and conduct investigations. Meanwhile, the media in Southeast Asia have been more measured in reporting terrorism and carefully following information and clues given by their governments. Regional reports have focused on socio-economic, cultural, racial and religious factors that might have contributed to terrorism, which regional media see as a political problem, not a military one.

This chapter examines Western media coverage since the Bali bombings, focusing in particular on the question of whether Thailand is a safe haven for international terrorists. It also examines in detail issues related to travel warnings. The reactions of the Thai government, policy implications as well as problems related to possible terrorist acts in southern Thailand, will also be discussed.

Thailand as a Safe Haven for Terrorists?

Thailand's 150-year history of struggle against Western colonisation provides insights into the Thai attitude towards terrorism. When Thailand was called Siam, its leaders provided assistance in both cash and kind to underground independence movements throughout the region. When Pridi Banomyong was prime minister in the 1930s, he established the Southeast Asian League in Bangkok to assist revolutionary movements from Indonesia, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia to fight against Western colonisers. The most famous of all the Southeast Asian revolutionaries was Nguyen Ai Quoc. Starting in 1928 he used Nakorn Phanom and Sakhon Nakon in northeast Thailand for several years as bases to coordinate the national liberation struggle against the French. When he won the war of independence in 1945, he became President Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam. A star fruit tree, which Ho planted during his stay in Nakorn Phanom, is now a popular tourist attraction. During the Cold War, Thailand also served as proxy bases for US special forces operating inside Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia.

This time-tested tradition of tolerance toward regional rebel groups continues today without official endorsement. Currently, at least two dozen independence movements have their representatives in Thailand, including the Tamil Tigers from Sri Lanka, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), the independence movements from Nagaland and Assam in India, fighters from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh, and not to mention assorted Myanmarese ethnic rebels operating along the Thai-Myanmar border. This generosity and tolerance derives from the historical Thai empathy towards the underdog.

However, these much heralded past deeds are being perceived differently now. After the September 11 attacks and the 12 October 2002 Bali bombings, Thailand has come under the world's microscope, as it has become clear that international terrorists have been moving into Southeast Asia and passing through Thailand. Internationally linked terrorists have been using Thailand as a transit or rendezvous point for over a decade but until recently Bangkok continued to deny that the country has been a safe haven for terrorists.

By maintaining its denials, the Thai government thought it could improve the confidence of the Thai people, who were bewildered by growing criticism from outside. The official explanation has always been that no international terrorists reside in Thailand. However it was obvious from history that Thailand was an ideal place for brief stopovers by terrorists to regroup, plan or strike at foreign targets. To be sure, Thailand should have known much better about the nature and consequences of international terrorist attacks inside its territory. As early as 1972, Thailand had the first encounter with a terrorist group, known as the Black September Organisation. At the end of December that year, the group seized the Israeli Embassy in a business district. Consequently, Thailand encountered nine more terrorist incidents throughout the remaining three decades of the 20th century.[1]

These attacks came mainly from two major groups — the Myanmarese ethnic groups, mainly the Karen fighting for independence, and the militant Islamic groups such as the Iraqi Islamic Action organisation, the Komando Jihad Movement of Indonesia and Hezbollah of Lebanon. The attacks by the Myanmarese ethnic groups were concentrated on Thai citizens and provincial officials as well as Myanmarese officials residing in Thailand. Hezbollah's attacks were directed against Israeli institutions and citizens and those countries sympathetic to its cause. But none of these attacks appeared to prompt successive Thai governments to review the long-held practice of providing sanctuary for foreign political groups. Nor did the authorities think of tightening the lax immigration rules. However the experience gained from coping with the Komando Jihad hijacking of an Indonesian plane with 43 passengers

on board in March 1981 proved valuable. It led to the formulation of the country's first counter-terrorism policy in 1983. The policy was reviewed twice, in 1993 and in 2002.

When CNN and *The Washington Post* (*WP*) first reported on 21 and 23 October 2002 respectively that the Al Qaeda group and its operatives had opened a new frontline in Southeast Asia, the Thai authorities were not alarmed even though at that time the country had been flooded with travel advisories from the West warning travellers to be cautious. Both CNN and the *WP* reported that Riduan Isamuddin or Hambali, an Al Qaeda operative in Southeast Asia, held a meeting in Thailand in January 2002 where it was decided to switch from "hard" to "soft" targets such as bars, nightclubs and cafes in the region, along with Western diplomatic targets. *The New York Times* on 7 November, datelined Angkor Wat in Cambodia, reported the same fact. But it was *The Asian Wall Street Journal* (*AWSJ*) that threw a monkey wrench into the works. In its 7 November edition it published a front-page article by Jay Solomon and James Hookway (subsequently covered by both CNN and *WP*) asserting that the Bali bombings had been planned at the January meeting in southern Thailand by leading members of the Jemaah Islamiyah.

The *AWSJ* article immediately raised eyebrows among Thai leaders. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra condemned the report as "crazy". "It was ridiculous," he said in the *Thai Rath Daily* on 8 November, and questioned how the *AWSJ* could report that a meeting about the Bali bombings was held in southern Thailand. In the following days, Thaksin's criticism generated a chain of official comments. On 9 November Defence Minister General Thammarak Isarangkura na Ayudhya, according to the *Mathichon Daily*, accused the *AWSJ* of making up the story, "Nobody knows who was responsible for the Bali attacks, and how the hell could they know? They are the tailless dog. Thailand is too peaceful so they want to destroy it." As result, the minister ordered an investigation to determine if the article violated Thai law by defaming the country and the government. A week later, the special branch police that oversaw the local and foreign media ruled that the article had indeed violated Thailand's peace and honour under the draconian Printing Law of 1941.[2]

On 25 November, the *AWSJ* decided to issue a correction pointing out that the intelligence sources cited in the article believed the Bali bombings might have been planned in Thailand. This amplification pleased the Thai government and averted further action against the paper. Government spokesman Sita Divari was quick to claim victory saying that the *AWSJ* had "apologised" for the story, which in fact was not the case. Following this exchange, Thai leaders went through several metamorphoses trying to grapple with the real

situation regarding possible terrorist activities in their country. Finally they moved away from the long practiced policy of "neither deny nor confirm" to a stance of "partial deny and partial confirm" with respect to the presence of international terrorists in Thailand. Supreme Commander General Surayuth Julanont had the courage to partially confirm these allegations, saying that suspected international terrorists had visited Thailand. He reiterated that there was no concrete evidence the Muslim extremists were planning attacks in Thailand. In his interview with the Associated Press on 2 December, he said a group of seven people came into Thailand in January 2002, and two others came earlier but it was not known when. One person (Mohammed Mansour Jabarah) had stayed in Thailand for at least two weeks, before going to a third country (Kuwait) where he was arrested, he said. Surayuth's revelation confirmed for the first time that international terrorists passed through Thailand. A day later, a more subdued Thaksin said because Thailand received huge numbers of tourists, it was possible that terrorists may have slipped into the country unnoticed.

Several weeks of the Western media's sustained "bombardment" of Thailand as a safe haven for terrorists prompted the Thai Foreign Ministry to regard these reports as blown out of proportion. It finally took action by issuing a rebuttal on 12 December 2002. In a press briefing, Krit Garnchanagoonchorn, deputy permanent secretary for foreign affairs, confirmed that Hambali was in Thailand for several days early in the year and escaped "by less than a day". Krit acknowledged that terrorists could exploit Bangkok's effort to promote itself as a regional hub of communications, trade, finance and tourism, and its general welcome of foreigners. "Thailand is an open society," he said. "We can't rule out the possibility of a transient passage of terrorists." He then criticised CNN's initial report[3] for causing the alarm and leading the international public to believe that Thailand was a safe haven for terrorists planning their next attacks. He said Thailand should not be seen as a safe haven for terrorists like those linked to the Bali bombings. Citing an investigation by Indonesian authorities, the ministry said there was no linkage between the Bali bombings and Thailand. He flatly denied reports that local Al Qaeda cells existed "because there is no condition conducive to establish terrorist networks". He said that the Thai government had implemented counter-terrorism measures such as controlling the sale of weapons and explosive devices, combating document and visa forgery, countering money laundering as well as signing all international conventions related to terrorism.[4]

This was a bold statement given the scant knowledge the government and the Foreign Ministry had of international terrorist networks such as Al

Qaeda and its cells in Southeast Asia. Given current political and social conditions as well as the porous border areas in the Muslim dominated southern Thailand, it is possible that suspected terrorists can move back and forth undetected and regroup at any given time. The Thai–Malaysia border checkpoints are easy entry points. Further investigations of the JI and Al Qaeda networks in Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia since the September 11 and Bali attacks revealed that key JI members including Hambali, Mohammed Mansour Jabarah and Yazid Sufaat had visited Thailand on various occasions. They found the country and its southern part easy to access.[5] According to an investigation by *The Star*, a Malaysian paper, published on 1 January 2003, there is a close link between JI and Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (Malaysian Militant Group). It said Hambali began meeting KMM members from 1997 to discuss plans to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia. It is an open secret that KMM members have connections and relationships with Thai-Muslims living in Pattani, Satun, Narathiwat and Yala, where members of Muslim separatist groups once waged wars of secession against the Thai government. Surayuth and military intelligence sources said KMM members frequently sneaked into the south to avoid harassment from Malaysian security forces. One senior police intelligence official said that during their stay in southern Thailand and elsewhere, some of them tried to purchase powerful explosive gelignite, known as "powergel". The huge sausage-like explosive sticks are produced locally. Between 2000 and 2002, according to a police intelligence source, an estimated 3,380 powergel sticks were reported missing from major explosive manufacturers.[6]

The Thai provincial authorities tend to tolerate the KMM presence as long as they do not engage in any activity harmful to the Thai communities. In fact, most of them do adopt a low profile. In addition, Thai intelligence officials do not have sufficient knowledge or means to determine the true identities of the militant Muslims or KMM in their midst. However, the Thai intelligence networks have reorganised to improve their coordination and assessment. Now, input from the country's key intelligence units such as the National Intelligence Agency and the Supreme Command Headquarters' Joint Operations Centre, including data from smaller units working for the Interior Ministry and the Immigration Office, will be sent to the Yala-based Centre of Joint National Intelligence for an integrated analysis and assessment.

Since the Bali bombings, Thai-Muslims living in conservative Pattani, more than other Thai-Muslims in other provinces, have been sensitised by the developments in Malaysia and Indonesia, especially the harsh treatment levied on

JI members in those countries and Singapore. The war on Iraq also caused widespread negative feelings towards the US and its allies, which includes Thailand. Sympathy among Thai-Muslims towards the Muslim brotherhood elsewhere has also increased. These developments have enhanced the popularity of fundamentalist Islam. In Pattani and Yala, at least 5,000 Wahhabis along with over 10,000 members belonging to the local JI, are well respected and entrenched in the South. The three-year old Yala College of Islam, currently with 800 students, preaches Islam as laid down by Abdullah bin Wahhab, the founder of the Wahhabi sect in Saudi Arabia. Thai officials believe that Thai-Muslims who are Jemaah Islamiyah members are not to be confused with the JI in other countries in the region. Both officials and Muslim scholars have not been convinced about the "linkage" between the Thai JI and Al Qaeda. They consider the Thai JI group a social movement to promote the well being of Thai Muslims. They are not believed to be engaged in any terrorist activity and can be found on various university campuses throughout Thailand.

From after World War II to the late 1980s, the situation in southern Thailand was extremely violent as government forces battled Muslim separatists. It was commonplace to have local people kidnapped and killed and certain roads blocked or destroyed. The later decision to drop the policy of forced assimilation in favour of peaceful cooperation improved relations between Thai-Buddhists and Thai-Muslims. Permitting Thai-Muslims to take part in politics and decision-making enabled some of them to make it to the top. Thailand's interior minister and former foreign minister are Muslims. There are similarly numerous Muslim senators and MPs.

In order to avoid further radicalisation of Islam in Thailand, Muslim scholars and community leaders in the south urged the Thai government to remain neutral and not follow the US policy on Iraq because it could jeopardise Bangkok's relationship with Muslim countries and alienate the estimated six million Thai-Muslims. They pointed out that Thai-Muslims were deprived of an "axe to grind" following the introduction of the more enlightened policy of peaceful co-operation some two decades ago.

At the moment, it is too early to say what kind of short, medium or long-term impact of the counter-terrorism campaign in neighbouring countries would have on the Thai-Muslims in the south. Given the long history of violent incidents in the south, it is difficult to say that Thailand is free of terrorism. After all, several incidents that occurred in the south after September 11 bore the imprint of the Muslim separatists.

The Politics of Travel Advisories

Travel advisories have had a long history in Thailand. During the height of the Cambodian conflict throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, it was customary for the US, Japan and Europe, whose citizens formed the majority of tourists visiting Thailand, to issue travel warnings for their citizens to avoid sensitive Thai-Cambodian border areas. The advisories would normally be released during the dry-season offensives by the Cambodian resistance fighters and would be reported by news wire services. With hundreds of thousands of Cambodian refugees residing in Thailand, attacks on border camps at that time were common. After Thai-Cambodian artillery shelling subsided, the border fighting would switch from the western to the eastern flank of the Thai-Myanmar border, the scene of border clashes between Myanmarese and ethnic rebel forces for the past five decades. The fighting continues today.

In fact, these warnings related to border clashes had little effect, if any, in dampening Thailand's much-valued tourist industry. The warnings did not concern Thai officials. Neither did they alarm the security agencies into upgrading their security preparedness or reacting in paranoid ways. Past interviews with border provincial officials also showed that tourists visiting the border areas understood well the potential dangers posed by invading troops or straying artillery shells. They took their own precautionary measures or avoided the targeted areas altogether. As a rule, local officials would prevent tourists from travelling near the conflict-torn border areas. In the past 25 years, no foreign tourists have been killed or injured by the border conflicts, except some Thai villagers. From 1980 to 2000, tourist arrivals to Thailand doubled from five to almost ten million.

The Bali bombings turned things upside down. Responding to the attacks, the US, UK, European Union, Australia as well as other Western countries issued travel advisories for Southeast Asia in quick succession. The warnings came at an importune time, right before the start of the peak tourist season at the end of the year. The governments in this region were unhappy and treated the warnings as a death knell for their tourist industry. Their common fear was of a drastic drop in tourists and cancellations of business and convention reservations. Bali, one of the most popular tourist attractions in the world, suffered instantly. Within days, the bombings literally emptied pristine beaches throughout the island. Estimates of lost revenue to the Indonesian economy varied from hundreds of million dollars to one billion dollars. The travel warnings also hit Thailand badly as the government tried to calm the estimated 30,000 participants scheduled to take part in the World Scout Jamboree

at the end of December 2002. It was the country's biggest international event ever, involving visitors from 131 countries.

The Thai government repeatedly sought clarifications and explanations from the countries issuing the warnings. Regarding the US travel advisory issued on 2 November, a senior US diplomat said in private that the US warning did not specify Thailand as it was aimed at the Southeast Asian region in general, unlike the ones issued by Australia and the EU. The fact that the warning did not make it onto the pages of the major national dailies in the US, he pointed out, showed it was not serious. The diplomat said the warning reminded Americans of the potential for terrorist actions against US citizens abroad, specifically in Southeast Asia. The warning asserted that in the aftermath of the terrorist bombings in Bali, the possibility existed that similar attacks might occur in other Southeast Asian countries. The diplomat added that during the same period, the US State Department released several travel warnings for American tourists wishing to visit Israel and they were reported in national newspapers.

As such, he argued that the warnings did not affect American tourists coming to Thailand. Apparently, he was right. After a reported cancellation of hotel and convention reservations in the aftermath of the Bali bombings, the number of American tourists to popular Thai tourist attractions did not lessen. Instead, it increased towards the fourth quarter of 2002. However, the EU warnings did have a negative impact. Arrivals of European tourists fell in comparison with the same period the previous year. The Thai authorities said the EU warning on 25 October 2002 of the dangers of travelling to the resort island of Phuket was extremely damaging to the tourist industry. The EU presidency's spokesman from the Danish Foreign Ministry said visitors should exercise vigilance at tourist sites and should consider not entering them if there was an insufficient security presence. By that time, he said that Australia, Sweden, Norway and Germany had also issued travel warnings to Phuket. The EU spokesman highlighted Patong Beach in Phuket as of particular concern.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer was the most succinct when he said on 25 October 2002 that Australia had received intelligence that Phuket was a potential terrorist target. Downer said, "We know from the Bali experience that you can't be too cautious, and we have had some information in relation to Phuket, and Phuket is a favoured holiday resort for Australians." The British government also issued a strong warning to its citizens travelling to Thailand to take "extreme caution". It said, citing intelligence reports, that

the threat to British nationals visiting the island had "increased significantly". Thirty Britons were killed at Bali.

The repeated Phuket travel warnings upset the Thai government, which immediately dispatched local police to investigate. The police did not report anything unusual on the resort island. But a private briefing given by a senior foreign ministry official in early November 2002 revealed that the alarm bell was triggered by Western tourists, who spotted three suspicious Middle Eastern men walking around bars and tourist areas in Patong Beach — something which immediately caused concern and rumours among Western tourists. Thai military and police leaders said repeatedly that there was no indication of any terrorist movement in Patong Beach and the Western countries were over reacting. Tej Bunnag, Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs, said these travel advisories were indiscriminate.

When the ASEAN leaders met in early November 2002 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia for their annual summit, they lashed out at the travel advisories. Thai Prime Minister Thaksin was the most vocal among the leaders, demanding that the warnings against travel to Thailand be rescinded, calling them unfair and unfounded. He said this would unnecessarily discourage tourists. He dismissed the warnings as speculative, issued by Western governments for domestic political reasons at a great cost to Thailand, where tourism accounts for about six percent of the country's gross domestic product. The prime minister reiterated that there was no intelligence to warrant such warnings. The ASEAN leaders also appealed to the rest of the world to stop warning travellers against going to their region because of fears of terrorism. They stressed their determination to cooperate actively in the fight against "the evil of terrorism". In a statement, the ASEAN leaders said, "We resolve to intensify our efforts, collectively and individually, to prevent and suppress the activities of terrorist groups in the region."

Nevertheless, further reports on potential terrorist activity in Thailand continued unabated and even reached a new level. Citibank's Hong Kong-based regional security office on 17 November issued a travel warning that noted the presence in Thailand of an Islamic militant linked to Al Qaeda who "might be involved in planning a terrorist attack to take place in Bangkok between the dates of 17–21 November". The warning was the only one that specifically mentioned the red-light districts of Patpong, Soi Cowboy and Nana Plaza as likely targets. This prediction, fortunately, did not come true, prompting Prime Minister Thaksin to ask sardonically how a bank came to behave like an intelligence agency.

The situation turned from bad to worse at the end of November, with the attacks in Mombassa, Kenya that led to the deaths of Israeli tourists. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand, in 2002 more than 90,000 Israeli tourists visited Thailand, a popular tourist spot for visitors from the country of 6.5 million. However, after the Mombassa blasts, the Jewish daily, *Yediot Acharonot*, reported on 2 December that the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs had issued travel advisories warning citizens not to visit Egypt, Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Eritrea — and Thailand. In addition, the Israeli airline, Arkia, decided later to stop operating flights from Tel Aviv to Chiang Mai and Phuket.

Also at the end of November, Australia and Canada decided to close their embassies temporarily in the Philippines after receiving information of a planned attack. The closure showed the low level of confidence the two countries had in the overall security situation in the Philippines. What Thailand and the Philippines experienced probably represents a new trend in Southeast Asia. This lack of confidence amongst Western diplomats will continue as long as some countries in the region fail to beef up their counter-terrorism measures as requested or refuse to treat terrorism threats more seriously.

In sum, there were several reasons why Thailand itself reacted so strongly against travel warnings. Following the Bali bombings, thousands of tourists had flocked to Thailand after they cancelled their trips to Bali. Thai officials naturally wished to see this favourable condition continue, given the well-known and fierce competition between the Bali and Phuket resorts. However the warnings affected Thailand's reputation as a safe destination. Prime Minister Thaksin had also been trying to promote a positive image.

Second, the Thai government felt that the warnings were groundless and based on hearsay. It argued that there was no indication of specific threats in the region. Hence concerned governments should simply have consulted the Thai authorities to work out preventive measures to safeguard their citizens holidaying in Thailand. Third, these warnings caught the Thai government off-guard as it had vehemently denied the existence of terrorism networks inside the country. The warnings just rubbed salt into the wound as the government was concerned that they could compel foreign dignitaries to reconsider visiting Thailand to attend two major events — the Asian Cooperation Dialogue and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting — that were scheduled for mid-June and October 2003 respectively. Finally, the Thai government feared that the travel advisories would affect its new tourism campaign in attracting foreign tourists. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) had set a target of 10.5 million tourists in 2002. Furthermore, it was feared that

the US attack on Iraq in March 2003, by possibly instigating more terrorist attacks in reprisal, would also affect the industry.

Inevitably, the controversy over travel warnings will continue as long as the threat from terrorism remains. The discontent has inevitably spilled over to other political issues. At a regional terrorism meeting in Manila in November 2002, a senior Filipino security official threatened to retaliate against Western travel warnings, saying that his country would retaliate by issuing a similar warning for its citizens travelling to the West, especially the US. Apparently that was what even Indonesia had in mind. On 17 January 2003, Jakarta issued a travel advisory, warning Indonesians to postpone visits to the United States. The move was seen as a retaliatory measure directed against Washington's plan to have all Indonesian tourists fingerprinted when visiting the US. The new immigration policy is aimed at tracking potential terrorists. If the list expands to include other ASEAN countries, it could further sour ASEAN-US relations, prompting further retaliatory measures by ASEAN against the US. This would be unfortunate as ASEAN-US ties have been on good terms of late due to their common effort to fight international terrorism.

Conclusion

Despite Thailand's continued denials and official bickering about biased Western media, the *AWSJ* article and other reports have raised the level of awareness among Thai security officials of the seriousness of terrorism and the need to scrutinise more closely potential international terrorists visiting Thailand and their attempt to establish local cells. Terrorist experts such as Rohan Gunaratna, Zachary Abuza and researcher Sidney Jones of the International Crisis Group, as well as Bangkok-based Western diplomats, have concluded that Al Qaeda-affiliated groups have penetrated Thailand. However, the Thai government took a long time to accept this fact even though growing circumstantial evidence suggested such a possibility was highly likely.[7]

Nevertheless, the Cabinet approved in early December 2002 the Foreign Ministry's recommendation to restrict visa issuance. The number of foreign countries whose nationals do not need entry visas for a 30-day stay was reduced from 57 to 38 and those countries whose nationals can get a visa on arrival, from 96 to 14 countries. Most of the Middle Eastern and South Asian countries were affected, except Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and India. After the Bali bombings, moreover, overall security at entry points is more stringent and there are more police patrols. Thai airport authorities are planning to adopt airport security procedures that

have been used in US airports, including checking passengers' shoes and belts. To combat terrorism effectively, Thailand needs an integrated approach that does not leave any loophole to be exploited by any foreign elements up to no good.

The National Security Council (NSC), which oversees counter-terrorism policy,[8] has admitted that Thailand has still to develop the capability to match the skilful use of information and communication technologies by modern terrorist movements. Nevertheless, to help other Thai intelligence agencies to deal effectively with terrorism, the NSC is preparing a handbook containing a glossary with precise definitions on various activities related to terrorism. For instance, the Thai word for terrorism is *phu koh karn rai*. It has a broad meaning. During the Cold War when the campaign against communist insurgency was its peak, it meant communist revolutionaries who tried to overthrow the government. So whenever this word is used, it seems to provoke past images of communists surrounding government buildings or local police stations. At the moment, *phu koh karn rai* has become a much-abused word in Thailand, which could mean any person who uses violence to create a public disturbance. In southern Thailand, with its long history of violence and secessionist attempts, any act of defiance could be construed as an act of a terrorism or *karn koh karn rai*. This situation is further compounded by local politics involving ruling and opposition parties on one hand, and fighting between local mafia groups for control of the illegal narcotics trade, on the other.

Thailand does not want to stick its head out as it is still satisfied with its current position. It is a win-win situation as far as its ostrich-like policy is concerned. Thai authorities view the Western press reports on Al Qaeda in Thailand and its networks, as well as numerous travel advisories, as a cynical means to pressure them to commit more resources to fight against terrorism, which has become the top priority of Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. The Thai government declared instead that fighting drugs would be the country's top priority beginning February 2003. Thaksin declared drugs would be eradicated within three months. As such, terrorism was initially viewed with less urgency.

After all, Thai authorities held dear their belief that as long as potential terrorists and the like, who came in and out of Thailand, did not attack the country and harm Thai citizens, they should be allowed to pass through the country. Officials feared that if the international terrorist networks or individual terrorists were exposed, it could cause numerous problems. The best way was to avoid a confrontation with terrorists by maintaining the status quo. Moreover, the Thai authorities did not, and still do not, have enough funds

for the intelligence work and worse, they do not have sufficient infrastructure and personnel to adopt proactive measures. Thai intelligence officials are only capable of follow-up missions and their ability to predict terrorist attacks is low. Granted Thailand's desire to avoid confrontation and react with its head in the sand, it should not surprise anyone that most of the Thai authorities, if not all, supported the original low-key policy.

The benign presence of the Tamil Tigers in Thailand for decades has been highlighted as a successful example of how Thailand has coped with terrorists who use its territory. The Tigers have used Phuket as a base for arms procurement and other logistics support. They have been able to support terrorist activities in Sri Lanka for such a long time because they have not harmed the Thai people. They kept a low profile. When the Sri Lanka peace initiative started in August 2002, Thailand was chosen as the "neutral" venue. As such, although Bangkok signed agreements to cooperate with other ASEAN countries on intelligence exchanges and jointly fight terrorism, deep down Thai authorities were reluctant to fully support the broad US counter-terrorism agenda.

As one of five US allies in the Asia-Pacific region, Thailand had to also respond to President George W. Bush's ultimatum that either you are with the Americans or you are with the terrorists. That posed a huge dilemma for Thai policy makers who preferred a-middle-of-the-road policy and practice.[9] For a long time, the Thai people did not realise that someone else's terrorists may not necessarily be freedom fighters. The guns could be turned at any time.

Post-Script

On 10 June 2003, in the southern province of Narathiwat, the Thai police arrested three suspects[10] linking them to the regional terrorist group, Jemaah Islamiyah. The arrest coincided with the scheduled meeting between Thaksin Shinawatra and US President George W. Bush at the White House in Washington DC. The arrest came as a surprise to the Thai people because days earlier the government officials continued to dismiss reports that Thailand is a safe haven for regional terrorists. President Bush subsequently praised the arrest. Followed their bilateral talks, both sides issued a joint statement pledging to intensify their anti-terrorism cooperation. Since the September 11 event, the US had been urging Thailand to take up the anti-terrorism campaign seriously because members of Al Qaeda and their supporters had shifted

their bases from Afghanistan and Pakistan, after the fall of the Taliban government, and moved to Southeast Asia. The US intelligence had long identified Thailand as a safe haven.

After the arrest, Thaksin as well as the Thai officials admitted that there were JI terrorist cells in Thailand. Thaksin pointed out these cells were small and most of the terrorists used as a hiding place and to regroup. On 11 August 2003, the Thai special commando unit, with the assistance of the US intelligence, raided a six-floor apartment complex in Ayutthya, the old capital city of Thailand, and arrested Hambali and his wife, Noralwizah Lee Yin Len.[11] Hambali, the most wanted terrorist in Southeast Asia, was under surveillance by both Thai and US intelligence for a period of time followed reports that he was moving out of Cambodia, where he stayed for several months. Immediately after Hambali's arrest, Thaksin alleged that Hambali and Jemaah Islamiyah planned an attack for the APEC summit, which Thailand was due to host, on 20–21 October 2003. However, the prime minister later on retracted his remark saying instead that, Hambali planned to attack embassies of the US, Australia and Israel. Again, the arrest of Hambali came in at the same time with the passage of two new executive decrees on anti-terrorism measures and anti-money laundering.[12] Thaksin said that the new decrees were needed to combat terrorists as time was running out. In addition, he argued that Thailand needed an anti-terrorism law to both provide protection to the visiting Asia-Pacific leaders and react swiftly to any terrorist act. However, the government's action was strongly condemned by lawyers, academics and activists, who viewed the new decrees with suspicion. If the past is any judge, they said that the previous Thai governments were able to handle numerous cases related to terrorism by using the existing Criminal Code.

Following Hambali's arrest, the Thai government has stepped up immigration controls at its 54 checkpoints along porous borders with Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia. Malaysian and Thai immigration officials have already worked together to tighten their entry process from both sides. To keep track on suspicious visitors, centralised computerisation of all immigration offices has been proposed as part of the anti-terrorism campaign. Demands on intelligence have increased tremendously since June 2003 and have caused budgetary strains as well as overstretched intelligence officials and their limited equipment. Rivalries and lack of coordination among intelligence agencies have also delayed timely assessment and recommendations that warranted immediate actions and counter-measures. Thailand is currently depending on foreign assistance and cooperation to track down regional terrorists who have used or are going to use the country as a safe haven.

In the months and years ahead, to counter the threat of terrorism, Thailand needs to have a comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy that can tackle terrorist issues in systematic ways in accordance with international practices and resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

Notes

1. According to the National Security Council, the ten terrorists incidents were:

   (a) Seizure of the Israeli Embassy by the Black September Organisation between 28–30 December 1973;
   (b) Hijacking of an aircraft from the Philippines landing in Thailand by the Moro National Liberation Front in Mindanao between 7–13 April 1977;
   (c) Hijacking of an Indonesian aircraft from Jakarta landing in Thailand by Komando Jihad between 28–31 March 1982;
   (d) Bombings at A E Nana claimed by Iraqi Islamic Action Organisation on 2 December 1983;
   (e) Hijacking of a Kuwaiti aircraft leaving Thailand between 5–20 April 1989;
   (f) Hijacking of a Myanmarese aircraft by Myanmarese students between 6–7 October 1990;
   (g) Hijacking of a Thai aircraft leaving Bangkok for Yangon by exiled Myanmarese students between 10–11 November 1991;
   (h) Abortive car bombs targeting the Israeli Embassy by Hezbollah on 17 March 1994;
   (i) The seizure of the Myanmarese Embassy by a Myanmarese student group, Vigorous Myanmarese Student Warrior, between 1–2 October 1999;
   (j) The seizure of Ratchaburi Hospital by a splinter group of Karen rebels, called God's Army, between 24–25 January 2000.

2. Before this controversial article on terrorism, *The Far Eastern Economic Review* (*FEER*), published by the same owner of *AWSJ*, was forced to apologise to the Thai government over its short article published in January 2002, which alleged that there was uneasiness between King Bhumibhol Adulyadej and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. In December 2001, the King openly criticised Thaksin's practice of double standards during his televised speech with the Cabinet on the eve of his birthday. To the Thai government, the Bangkok-based correspondents of *FEER* had committed *lese majeste* and had to be expelled. Later on, the *FEER*'s editor apologised for the misunderstanding.
3. The Foreign Ministry believed in the so-called "CNN effect" and blamed the cable network for playing up the reports on the alleged linkages between the terrorists involved in the Bali bombings and Thailand. The security officials also shared this view. However, the National Security Council also used the Western media's

report on Thailand to expose shortcomings in other Thai intelligence agencies. Therefore, the CNN effect had both pros and cons.

4. Thai authorities cracked down on 24 rings producing counterfeit documents, which included one foreigner found with 1,000 fake passports.
5. It is possible that JI and Al Qaeda members established links with Thai-Muslims who graduated from the Middle East. A senior foreign ministry official estimated that in the past ten years, about 5,000 Thai-Muslims graduated from universities in the Middle East. In 2002, 1,700 Thai Muslims studied in Egypt, 200 each in Saudi Arabia (mainly in Medina) and Pakistan, 150 in Syria, 70–80 in Sudan, 63 in Iraq and 50 in Yemen, according to a spokesperson for Chularachamontri, the spiritual leader of Thai-Muslims. The Foreign Ministry said that over half of the students studying in the Middle East do not read or speak Thai, which prompted the government to initiate a programme to teach the Thai language to them. Thai intelligence agencies have reported that a dozen Thai-Muslims fought in Afghanistan for the Taliban regime.
6. My own investigations show that the Royal Thai Police Headquarters and Defence Ministry were very lax with their auditing system as all powergel purchases must be approved by the two offices beforehand. In the past three years, there were 14 reported bombing incidents involving stolen powergel in the four southern provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani and Satun. For instance, on 28 August 2000, a car bomb with two 15-kilogram gas cylinders attached to powergel sticks was found in front of the city police station in Pattani. Fortunately, the bomb's delaying detonator device failed to work properly.
7. According to an army researcher, Gen. Thanaphol Boonyopadsadam, the Al Qaeda operative, Ramzi Ahmed Yousef was in Bangkok in 1994 after he planned the bombing of one of the World Trade Centre towers in New York on 23 February 1993. He said that Yousef also helped to assemble the truck bomb that was supposed to explode on 11 March 1994 in front of the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok. But the truck in question hit a motorcycle near the intersection on Chidlom Road, less than 100 yards from the embassy. The driver, who tried to pay off the motorcyclist with foreign currencies, decided to run away as a police car approached. The police seized the truck, without knowing about the existence of C4-bombs, and left the truck at the Lumpini Police Station nearby. On 17 March, police found the bomb and traced the fingerprints on the bomb to Yousef. Research confirmed that Yousef has trained a number of Thai Muslims. One of them has the name of Abdullah Salik, who later on escaped to Pakistan. See Thanaphol Boonyopadsadam, "Al Aqida Movement", *Journal of the National Defence College of Thailand*, No. 4, October–December 2001, pp. 93–98.
8. In the National Security Strategies for 2003–2006 approved last October, counterterrorism measures were incorporated for the first time. These included finding the root causes of terrorism and being ready to tackle movements or individuals engaged in terrorist activities; increasing cooperation and networking with

the international community in the counter-terrorism campaign and combating transnational crime; exchanging intelligence and establishing channels of communications with friendly agencies; as well as developing a common legislative process to deal with issues related to terrorism.

9. In his recent public lecture in Bangkok on 26 December, Professor Benedict Anderson of Cornell University suggested that Thailand should be a Southeast Asian Switzerland as far as terrorism issues are concerned, citing the peaceful coexistence with the Tamil Tigers as a good example.
10. The three were Dr. Waemahadi Waedaoh, Maisuri Abdulloh and Muzahij Abdulloh. Dr. Waedaoh, a medical doctor, owns a drug store in the city and is a well-known figure in the Thai-Muslim community. Maisuri Abdulloh is a religious teacher and also the director of Burna Tanor pondok school, with well over 200 students. Muzahij is Maisuri's son. Later on another suspect Saman Awaekaji, turned himself in to the police but was not charged with terrorist acts. The JI suspects were arrested after Singaporean intelligence tipped off their Thai counterparts.
11. On 13 August 2003, Hambali was whisked away from Thailand and taken into a US custody in an unknown location. The Thai police handed Noralwizah Lee Yin Len to the Malaysian police for interrogation.
12. The decrees were added on to the existing Criminal Code and the Anti-Money Laundering Act. They give power to the authorities to make arrests, issue search warrants or tap suspects' phones. Previously, the government used the anti-money laundering act against a group of journalists.

IV. *The ASEAN Factor*

Chapter 9

ASEAN Counter-Terror Strategies and Cooperation: How Effective?

Daljit Singh

Political violence and terrorism are not new to Southeast Asia, though Islamic terrorism as we know it today, with its international dimensions, is a relatively recent phenomenon. The most dangerous security threat encountered by the original five members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in an earlier era came from communist insurgency and subversion. This first emerged during colonial times because the communists were contenders for state power, together with the non-communist nationalists, in a post-colonial Southeast Asia. The intelligence capabilities of these states to cope with terrorism and subversion were honed during this fight against the communists. Also, an early lesson learned was that a comprehensive strategy was needed to defeat the communists. This was well illustrated by the battle against the first communist insurgency in Malaya from 1948 to 1960 that was defeated only by a strategy embracing military, intelligence, political, psychological, civic and economic instruments. The political response consisted of the granting of independence to Malaya, thereby undercutting the argument of the Communist Party of Malaya that it was fighting British colonialism and imperialism, and according Malayan citizenship rights to many Chinese residents of the country, which removed a grievance the communists had sought to exploit.

When ASEAN was established in 1967 the communist subversive and insurgency threat to the region was on the rise again, inspired by the revolutionary foreign policy of China during the Cultural Revolution, the intensification of Sino-Soviet rivalry for influence in the region and the wars in Indochina. All the then five members of ASEAN had clandestine communist cells and three, Thailand, Philippines, and Malaysia, experienced active communist insurgencies in the 1970s.

ASEAN countries' response to these developments was vigorous security and intelligence action against the insurgents and their clandestine political infrastructure as part of a broader approach based on the concepts of national resilience and regional resilience. National resilience required countries to strengthen themselves comprehensively — not only with regard to their security instruments, but also economically, politically, psychologically and socially — in order to make themselves less vulnerable to the threat of communist subversion and insurgency. Regional resilience referred to the strength of the region as a whole through national resilience, avoidance of bilateral conflicts, and regional cooperation.[1]

Given this background, ASEAN countries should be well aware that the current threat from Islamic terrorism is, in an important sense, one of political warfare that requires not only security action but a comprehensive counterstrategy, though in the present case the ideological and political response has to come mainly from the Muslim community and its leadership.

Most of the ASEAN countries that are exposed to the threat know that it is in their own vital interests to fight Al Qaeda and its associate organisations like the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) and Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM). Terrorism is not merely a danger to some innocent lives and to property. It is a threat to the economic well being of ASEAN countries because terrorist incidents affect the tourist industry and undermine investor confidence. Further, the JI is ultimately a threat to existing state power or territorial integrity of a number of countries, in view of its ultimate goal of setting up an Islamic caliphate embracing Indonesia, Malaysia, southern Philippines, southern Thailand and eventually Singapore and Brunei. But because of differences in threat perception and different domestic situations, the quality of the national will to deal with the problem, as well as the national capacities, have varied.

The response of ASEAN countries has been at least on five levels: the national level, the sub-regional level, the regional (ASEAN) level, at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) level, and at the international level.

National Responses

These clearly are the most important because in the end it is the will and the capacity of individual countries to act against terrorist cells within their own borders that matter most. As can be seen from the account below, since 11 September 2001 there has been improvement in the will and capabilities, though there still some significant shortcomings. The building of capacities has often required assistance from developed countries through bilateral or regional co-operative mechanisms.

Indonesia

Indonesia was in denial mode about the terrorist network within its borders until the Bali bombing of 12 October 2002. To many people in the country, the September 11 incident was largely an American problem. Even after the Bali bombing, for three weeks the media was fuelling the belief that the US was behind the bombing.[2] Islamic revivalism and the importance of Muslim voters in elections due in 2004 made it difficult for President Megawati to take firm action against domestic radical Islamic elements engaged in violence, though some key suspected foreign terrorist operatives were quietly handed over to the Americans, the most notable being Omar Al-Faruq.

However, there has been a marked change since the terrorist bombing in Bali. The well-publicised investigations by the Indonesian police that led to the arrests of those suspected of perpetrating the outrage, and their confessions on national television, have altered the country's perception of the terrorist threat. The authorities must be complimented for this skilful use of the media to get the public behind the government in the war against terrorism.

Another positive outcome of the Bali tragedy is that the Indonesian police has been shown to be efficient and capable, especially if provided with some technical assistance by friendly countries. They have both the will and the professional dedication to do the job. Indeed investigations into the Bali bombing uncovered a section of the JI network, including some important figures — especially Mukhlas, also known as Ali Ghufron, a key operational leader in JI. By February 2003 about 30 suspected members of the JI had been arrested.[3] Even more encouraging, was the arrest on Bintan island in the Riaus of Mas Selamat Kastari, head of the Singapore JI, following leads provided by the Singapore authorities. Two Indonesian nationals, believed to be his local contacts on Bintan, were also detained.[4] Although there have been more arrests

since then, including of some JI members outside the network responsible for the Bali bombing, it is not clear if they presage a comprehensive crackdown on the JI in Indonesia.

Indonesia has strengthened its legal and administrative infrastructure for dealing with terrorism. After the Bali bombing, the government issued two emergency Presidential decrees to immediately facilitate investigations and detentions. The two decrees were discussed in Parliament and passed as laws on 6 March 2003. They confer powers on the police to detain suspected terrorists without trial, authorise the death penalty for certain terrorist acts, and allow intelligence reports to be used as evidence.[5] A unit had earlier been set up in the office of the Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs to co-ordinate action against terrorism. Indonesia ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and was considering signing or ratifying various other conventions on terrorism and transnational crime.[6] It has enacted new legislation on money laundering, and set up a financial intelligence unit which is to be placed under the Central Bank. An Anti-Money Laundering Commission was to be set up as an independent body to enforce the law on money laundering. It is too early to say how effective these bodies will be in practice.

The Bali tragedy also galvanised a stronger political response. The President and most government leaders condemned terrorism. So did the two largest Muslim organisations, the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the Muhammadiyah which together have a following of about 70 million and a large network of educational and welfare organisations that have provided considerable immunity against radical Islamic ideas. Both NU and Muhammadiyah employed thousands of their members to help the police guard churches over the Christmas season 2002 — a powerful signal to the extremists that they do not have the support of the majority of Indonesian Muslims.

There have been other positive developments during the Megawati presidency, unrelated to the Bali tragedy. The Malino II peace agreement was concluded to end the fighting in the Malukus and an accord was also reached with the Free Aceh movement to end the hostilities in Aceh, but this proved short-lived. Nevertheless, by improving the prospects of peace and stability within Indonesia, these moves indirectly contribute to the fight against terrorism because local conflicts, if allowed to continue to fester, can be exploited by radical groups to further their own agendas. In the economic realm, President Megawati has achieved a measure of macro-economic stability, even though growth projections for 2002 and 2003 had to be reduced because of the Bali bombing.

However, while there appears to have been a sea-change in Indonesia's attitude to terrorism, there is no room for complacency. The JI network in Indonesia is probably quite extensive. It had been allowed to develop almost unhindered within the country for five years and much longer among radical Muslim exiles from the Suharto regime who had fled abroad in the 1980s. The Indonesian authorities do not know how many of their citizens have been trained in Afghanistan or in Mindanao.

The arrests so far may only have scratched the surface. The JI in Indonesia is probably an amorphous, dispersed organisation with links to radical Muslim groups.[7] Sidney Jones, the Jakarta-based author of the International Crisis Group (ICG) report on terrorism and radical Muslim groups in Indonesia has said that Indonesian terrorism "is clearly bigger than we thought, and there are more little groups than we thought . . . it covers the entire country — that's the scary thing".[8] Several important suspected terrorists in Indonesia remain on the loose, including Syawal Yasin, a key JI figure in South Sulawesi and at least half a dozen associates of Omar Al-Faruq, an Al Qaeda agent who was formerly operating in Indonesia and is now in American detention.

The trials of those involved in the Bali bombings are being conducted skillfully and are likely in the end to lead to their convictions (otherwise Indonesian authorities' credibility will be seriously questioned and their war against terrorism will suffer a major setback). Still, the government has to step gingerly in its counter-terrorism action and carry public opinion with it because of domestic political concerns. This situation may prevent a comprehensive security crackdown on the JI in Indonesia. President Megawati, her Vice-President Hamzah Haz, speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) Amien Rais, and perhaps even Security Minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, are likely to be contesting the Presidential election in 2004 and may not want to be seen as engaged in a witch hunt against the JI and the radical groups so as not to alienate conservative Muslims.

Secondly, there are weaknesses in intelligence capabilities and coordination that need to be remedied. It is best to locate the main intelligence effort against terrorism in the police force that has already done a good job in relation to the Bali bombings and has built up a measure of confidence among the public. Also the problem of corruption in agencies which form the frontline in the war against terrorism like the police, the army and the immigration service needs to be addressed, including the leakage of weapons and explosives from Indonesian military depots.[9]

Thirdly, Indonesia has fundamental problems that are not amenable to easy and quick solutions. Economic distress brought about by the economic crisis

since 1997 and rampant corruption provide readily exploitable issues for radicals to advance their cause. The institutions of government and governance, the legal and judicial systems are weak. These flaws, combined with the country's geography — a vast archipelago whose borders are difficult to police even in the best of circumstances — make it easier for radicals and terrorists to operate.

While moderate Islam has strong moorings and a wide following, the relative immunity it has so far provided against radicalism cannot be taken for granted in the longer term if there is no amelioration of the country's socio-economic problems. The radicals have been trying hard to increase their influence. They are also likely to have tried to infiltrate moderate Muslim parties with a view to eventually influencing the agendas of these parties from within. Ulil Abshar Abdallah, head of Liberal Islam Network, has expressed concern that Indonesian Muslims face a shrinking space for discussion as the space is being dominated increasingly by radicals, although they are a minority.[10]

To build up national resilience, Indonesia needs to improve its economic performance and quality of governance. It is therefore necessary to press on with reforms, both in the economic sphere and in areas like the legal system and the judiciary. Generous assistance should be provided by friendly countries for capacity building. The major moderate Muslim parties should engage the radicals vigorously in open debate. The media too can and should play an important role in this respect.

Ultimately it is what the Indonesians do and not do that will decide the future of Indonesia. Still, there is the need for the West, especially the US, and Japan, to accord more importance to Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, and to help it deal with its multi-faceted problems. The US in particular should remain sensitive to the complexities facing the Indonesian leadership in the prosecution of the war on terrorism. In the democratic politics of the country in which Islam will remain a significant force, anti-terrorism action must be seen by the Indonesian people to hit its true targets to avoid a Muslim backlash. This may not always be easy given the links of terrorist and radical elements with religious, charity or welfare organisations. A name like the Jemaah Islamiyah, which simply means Islamic community, could be used by any number of Muslim organisations. JI could have links with otherwise perfectly legitimate organisations like the Hidyatullah Foundation, a funding agency for religious boarding schools in conflict areas, or KOMPAK, a nation wide emergency relief organisation that has provided funds to Muslim refugees in South Sulawesi.

Philippines

The Philippines is an important link in the terrorist network in Southeast Asia. It was the first country in the region chosen by Al Qaeda to co-opt the local Islamic struggles against the Manila government into Al Qaeda's global *jihad* against the West. It was also the first country in the region to be used as a base for terrorist operations against Western interests, as illustrated by the foiled Operation Bojinka in 1995.[11]

The attractions of the Philippines to Al Qaeda included ongoing Muslim separatist struggles in the south against perceived Christian domination, Al Qaeda's early links in Afghanistan with leaders of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), easy entry and visa requirements, and relatively weak law and order and governance in the south. Al Qaeda provided funds and training to the ASG and the MILF through front organisations as well as legitimate businesses. Terrorists and radicals from a number of Southeast Asian countries have been trained in MILF camps. From 1997 the MILF allowed the JI to set up its own training facility within MILF's Camp Abu Bakar. This facility was run by Indonesian JI members and was meant exclusively for Southeast Asian JI trainees.[12] The Philippines also has porous maritime borders with East Malaysia and with Indonesia and there have been known movements of terrorist elements across these borders.

In view of all this the quality and effectiveness of counter-terrorist strategies in the Philippines have a significant bearing on the overall counter-terrorism effort in the region. On the positive side, there is a clear perception among the authorities that they have a serious security problem in the south with linkages to international terrorism. There is also a willingness to seek external help to deal with it. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, the Philippines strongly supported the US in the war against international terrorism and sought US assistance to defeat the ASG. Apart from its rebellion against the Manila government and links with international terrorism, the ASG had brought much adverse international publicity to the Philippines by its kidnappings of tourists. With several hundred fighters, they are also a less formidable adversary than the MILF. The US pledged assistance to upgrade the skills and equipment of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), including the provision of transport aircraft, helicopters, APCs, and patrol craft, in addition to anti-terrorist training. US special forces and other troops have been deployed to southern Philippines on a rotational basis for exercises and training with the AFP under the Balikatan (shoulder to shoulder) series of exercises. US military personnel accompanying AFP units in operations against the ASG

on Basilan Island have provided tactical intelligence and advice, and facilitated air support.

While these efforts weakened the ASG on Basilan, one of its strongholds, its overall capability was probably only dented during the 2002 operations and it still retains much of its strength. Recently Philippines military sources have claimed that the forces of the ASG may be bigger than originally estimated.[13] There was also the disturbing revelation in early 2003 of an Iraqi diplomat in Manila having links with an ASG operative. The diplomat, presumably an intelligence officer, was expelled as the US-led war against Iraq approached.

If the ASG still remains a concern, the more formidable MILF is a source of even greater anxiety. It has a guerilla force of 10,000 to 15,000 fighters that the AFP have never been able to defeat decisively. It also has had more extensive linkages with Al Qaeda and JI.

President Arroyo at first sought a negotiated political settlement with the MILF, though some hardline elements in the military favoured a military solution. The situation was not helped by the fact that the MILF, like the ASG, is factionalised, with the more radical factions favouring continuation of the armed struggle. Bombing attacks in civilian areas by the MILF, apparently to strengthen its negotiating position, has led to a hardening of President Arroyo's stance in favour of the use of force, though the door to a negotiated settlement has not been completely closed. The bombing of Davao airport on 4 March 2003 left 21 dead and 160 injured.[14] It was reportedly carried out by the MILF in retaliation for an earlier AFP siege and attack on a MILF camp. Meanwhile the MILF's linkages with JI, including training for JI elements in MILF camps have probably continued.[15]

Security operations against the ASG revealed defiencies in AFP equipment, including lack of night vision gear and helicopters that can fly at night. There have also been reports of corruption in the police and military forces that had earlier affected the operations against the ASG, including alleged collusion between elements of the ASG and the security forces at the local level.[16] At the national level there have also been rivalries and lack of co-operation between the security and intelligence services.[17]

In conclusion, the Philippines counter-terrorism effort is hampered by the complexity of the situation in the south, inadequate training and equipment in the military and corruption among the security forces at the local levels. The government's writ does not run in all parts of the south, raising doubts about its ability to deal effectively with international and regional terrorist connections with the MILF or ASG. In addition to its military and intelligence efforts, the Philippines needs a comprehensive strategy to deal with the

underlying grievances of the Moros in the south of the country. Better governance both nationally and in the south, and ability to carry out economic reforms to galvanise the Philippine economy, are also needed.

Thailand

Is there a terrorist (Al Qaeda or JI) problem in Thailand? Thailand's response to this question evolved from denial to cautious acknowledgment in May 2003.

Earlier Thailand had only admitted that JI and other terrorists could be using Thailand for transit to other places, but not as a sanctuary or base. Yet there were various indications that South Thailand had been used as a sanctuary by the terrorists because of the Muslim population there, the existence of Muslim separatist elements opposed to the Thai government, and a weak law and order situation. According to the Singapore government, those JI elements in Singapore who escaped the first wave of arrests in December 2001 were known to have first fled to South Thailand. Also, an unnamed *jihad* group based in south Thailand was a member of the regional alliance formed by the JI in 1999 called Rabitatul Mujahidin.[18]

Terrorists have used Bangkok for transit and stop-overs from the days of Ramzi Yousef in the early and mid-1990s. More recently, Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi was scheduled to board a flight to Bangkok from Manila when he was arrested. Likewise Agus Dwikarna, the Indonesian radical, was headed for Bangkok from Manila when he was detained by Philippine authorities. And in January 2002 Hambali met suspected Al Qaeda operative "Sammy" (Mohammed Mansour Jabarah, a Canadian national of Kuwaiti origin, later detained by the Americans) in Bangkok.[19]

According to various reports, Bangkok has been a haven for money-laundering and document forgery, with a significant Middle Eastern and African Muslim community. One fake travel document ring in the Bangkok area serving Al Qaeda was smashed by the Thais in 2002 with help from the FBI and suspected terrorists are said to have stayed in Bangkok's Middle Eastern district.[20]

Thailand had been taking preventive action through stepped-up security to secure some of its holiday attractions like Phuket and Pattaya from terrorist attack. However it did not take disruptive action against possible terrorist cells or supporters. All this, combined with porous borders and liberal immigration rules, have made Thailand a weak link in the regional anti-terrorism efforts.

However, the situation has changed since May 2003 when a member of the Singapore JI, Arifin Ali, was arrested in Bangkok after leads supplied by

the Singapore authorities. This was followed in June 2003 by the arrest in south Thailand of three Thai Muslim JI members and the revelation of a JI plot to attack five foreign embassies in Bangkok and soft targets in Phuket and Pattaya. Prime Minister Thaksin finally admitted there is a terrorist problem in Thailand. But Thailand has been proceeding very cautiously to deal with the problem so as not to scare off tourists or alienate the Muslim population in the extreme south of the country.

Malaysia and Singapore

Until the security crack down in 2001 and 2002 on suspected JI elements, Malaysia too had been developing into an important link in Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian and international strategy. The ties with Al Qaeda were nurtured by a group of radical Muslim exiles from Indonesia who had fled that country to evade arrest by the Suharto government. The most important of these were Indonesian clerics Abu Bakar Bashir, Abu Jibril and Riduan Isamuddin (also known as Hambali), who came to Malaysia in the early 1990s after stints in Afghanistan.

From Malaysia, this group, especially Hambali, linked up with Al Qaeda operatives and front organisations in the Philippines. In 1994 Hambali set up a front company, Konsojaya Trading Company, in Malaysia together with Wali Khan Amin Shah, a member of the Operation Bojinka cell in Manila. Following Abu Jibril's arrest by the Malaysian authorities in April 2001, Hambali became the head of the Malaysia *mantiqi* (district or region) *Ulla* of the JI that covered Malaysia and Singapore — until 2001 when he decided to flee Malaysia for Afghanistan following news of the arrest of an unidentified friend in Indonesia and handed over the leadership to Mukhlas. Al Qaeda operatives periodically visited Malaysia. A 5 January 2000 meeting in Kuala Lumpur featured two of the September 11 bombers, two planners of the attack on the USS Cole later that year as well as Ramzi bin Al-Shibh who failed to enter the US for the September 11 attack and is now under detention with the Americans after being captured in Karachi in 2002. In September and October 2000, Malaysian JI member Yazid Sufaat hosted Zacarias Moussaoui, the so-called 20th bomber of the September 11 operation, and gave him a letter of introduction for employment in the US.[21]

Although Malaysia had been aware of some of these Al Qaeda activities, it did not know the extent of the JI network in the country and its links with Al Qaeda until after 11 September 2001. In Singapore too the JI network came to light only after September 11.

Both Malaysia and Singapore have efficient and professional security services first developed by the British during colonial times to fight communist subversives. And both have acted firmly against the terrorist threat. Up to June 2003 Singapore had detained 33 terrorist suspects under the Internal Security Act. Malaysia had detained over 70 by March 2003, including a retired army colonel, Abdul Manaf Kasmuri, for being a member of the KMM. Since then Malaysia has detained a number of other terrorist suspects and also uncovered three tons of ammonium nitrate, a substance used for making bombs.

It can be said that both countries are on top of their terrorist problem. It is difficult for Al Qaeda to now use Malaysia as a base or transit area because of the vigilance of the security services. Some JI members evaded arrest but they are in hiding, probably abroad. In Singapore, with the last batch of arrests in September 2002, the JI on the island was crippled. However, given Singapore's small size and location, it will remain vulnerable to terrorist attacks organised from outside the country.

Malaysia and Singapore have good intelligence cooperation with each other on the terrorist threat, notwithstanding acrimony over other bilateral issues in recent years. Both countries also have close intelligence cooperation with the Philippines and Indonesia and with friendly powers like the US and Australia.

Singapore and Malaysia have had military and intelligence relations with the US for many years, pre-dating the September 11 attacks. Singapore strongly supported the US in the global anti-terror war, including the US attack on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It has hosted a logistic unit of the US Seventh Fleet for almost a decade and allows its naval base and one of its air bases to be used by US warships and aircraft for refueling and transit. After September 11, both Malaysia and Singapore provided protection to US merchant ships transiting the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, even though, as a Muslim majority country, Malaysia could not publicly endorse US military action in Afghanistan.

Malaysia's military and intelligence relations with the US were apparently unaffected by the difficulties in bilateral political relations prior to 11 September 2001, in particular during the second term of the Clinton Administration. For instance Malaysia was alerted to the 5 January 2000 meeting of Al Qaeda operatives in Malaysia by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Malaysian secret services monitored the Al Qaeda cell in Kuala Lumpur hosting the meeting and provided the CIA with names, photos and video clippings.[22]

US-Malaysia political relations improved significantly after 11 September 2001 as both countries focused on the common threat from terrorism, culminating in Dr Mahathir's state visit to the US in May 2002. During the visit a joint declaration to fight terrorism was signed. It specified enhanced bilateral cooperation in intelligence sharing, countering terrorist finance and money laundering, border controls, transportation and law enforcement.[23]

Both Singapore and Malaysia have strengthened the co-ordination of their domestic security agencies to deal with the terrorist threat and have been strengthening their legislative frameworks for combating terrorist financing. In Malaysia an investigative unit has also been set up to monitor radical Muslim influences in the armed forces and police.

In the case of Singapore a Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre, a National Security Secretariat and a Security Policy Review Committee have been set up to streamline domestic coordination. Singapore has signed the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. There is greater scrutiny of banks and other financial institutions. Moneychangers and remittance houses are required to be licensed and come under the scrutiny of the Commercial Affairs Department, the enforcement agency. The Republic also enacted the United Nations Act in October 2001 which allows the government to pass enabling legislation as may be required by the United Nations on non-financial aspects of anti-terrorism suppression.

In terms of national resilience, both countries enjoy better economic and social conditions than other Southeast Asian countries and possess relatively sound institutions of state and governance. However, for Malaysia, dealing with Islamic terrorists is a more complex challenge, at least in one respect, than dealing with Communist ones of the past — unlike the latter who were mostly ethnic Chinese, the former come from the majority Malay-Muslim community. Hence the need to separate terrorism from Islam is even more important for Malaysia, especially when it also faces a serious political challenge from the fundamentalist Islamic party, PAS, than it is to Singapore where Malay-Muslims form a minority, though a significant one.

Sub-Regional Cooperation

This is cooperation below the ASEAN level. The most important part of it is exchange of intelligence information on terrorists, usually on a bilateral basis. Obviously such co-operation is critical in the fight against terrorism.

The JI is a transnational organisation covering a number of countries in Southeast Asia with links among cells in different countries. Al Qaeda is a

global terrorist network with links with associate bodies like JI and KMM. Members of both organisations are known to have co-operated across national borders when planning terrorist attacks. For instance the foiled terrorist operation in Singapore in late 2001 envisaged co-operation between JI elements in Singapore, Malaysia and Philippines as well as suspected Al Qaeda operatives in the region and abroad. Further, it is known that in 1999 the JI regional leadership formed a secret regional alliance of *jihad* groups, Rabitatul Mujahidin (RM — Mujahidin coalition), to facilitate sharing of resources for training, procurement of arms, financial assistance and terrorist operations. The members of the alliance were the JI, the KMM, the MILF, an unnamed Rohingya group based in Bangladesh and an unnamed group based in south Thailand.[24]

Suspected terrorists are also known to have sought refuge in neighbouring countries when security action is mounted against them in one country. For instance when Singapore authorities arrested the first batch of JI members in December 2001, some evaded arrest and fled to South Thailand and thereafter to Indonesia. Some of those who dodged arrest in Malaysia also fled to South Thailand.

In view of what has been described above, intelligence co-operation between states is essential in the war against terrorism. Such co-operation has led to important arrests and breakthroughs. Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi, an Indonesian national and a JI bomb maker and trainer based in the Philippines, was arrested after leads supplied to the Philippine authorities by Singapore. Al-Ghozi was involved in a series of bomb attacks in Manila in 2000 and in the foiled bombing plot in Singapore. Singapore JI member Arifin Ali was arrested by Thai authorities in May 2003 and handed over to Singapore after leads supplied by Singapore. The arrest of Mas Selamat Kastari, the head of Singapore JI, by the Indonesian police on Bintan island in the Riaus in early 2003 was also as a result of information supplied by Singapore, but Selamat was not handed over to Singapore by the Indonesian authorities. And Malaysia and Singapore cooperated closely with Indonesia in the Bali bombing investigations.

Intelligence exchanges at the sub-regional level are reinforced by bilateral intelligence exchanges with countries outside the region, like US and Australia.

Another sub-regional initiative which deserves mention is what began as a trilateral agreement between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines on transnational crime in the trilateral border area between the three countries, and subsequently expanded to include Thailand and Cambodia. It is interesting that five ASEAN members could get together in this anti-terrorism pact regardless of the ASEAN consensus principle. However, apart from meetings

and declarations, the grouping has yet to demonstrate concrete action in the fight against terrorism.

Cooperation at ASEAN Level

Cooperation within ASEAN has two aspects. One is political and this is expressed through various ASEAN declarations on terrorism. The declarations are important in reinforcing the political will of countries to keep up the fight against terrorism.

The first major ASEAN meeting after 11 September 2001 was the Seventh ASEAN Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei, in November of the same year. On 27 November it issued the ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism[25] that stresses the need to strengthen co-operation at all levels — bilateral, regional, international — to combat terrorism "in a comprehensive manner". This ASEAN position was reinforced at the 8th ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2002, which took place after the Bali bombing, through its Declaration on Terrorism.[26]

At the level of practical co-operation the most important vehicle is the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). AMMTC is headed by ministers of Home Affairs and forms the core of ASEAN counter-terrorism cooperation. It also deals with other transnational crimes like drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, sea piracy, arms smuggling and money laundering. It is a useful vehicle for exchange of information and ideas on these problems and on laws and practices in each country.

AMMTC was meeting every year and terrorism was on its agenda even before the attacks of 11 September 2001. After the September 11 attacks AMMTC decided to hold a Special Meeting on Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur in May 2002 where it updated its terrorist work plan. The joint communiqué issued after the meeting mentioned projects and initiatives to be undertaken, including offers by Malaysia for training on intelligence procurement and psychological warfare in relation to terrorism and offers by Singapore to organise training on bomb/explosives detection, post-blast investigation, airport security and passport/document security and inspection.[27]

The emphasis is on capacity building through learning from best practices. There is no lack of ideas but implementation in the AMMTC has been slow in the past. However this may change with the implemention of the rolling workplan that has been adopted since May 2002. For instance, under this work plan, Singapore will be running a course in July 2003 on aviation security, with experts from the US as resource persons, followed by courses on intelligence

analysis (August 2003), post-blast investigations (October 2003) and Bombs and Explosives Identification (November 2003).

There are also other ASEAN-level forums that discuss terrorism as part of their broader agenda. Two examples are Aseanapol, the network of ASEAN countries' police organisations that co-operates to fight crime and the informal ASEAN intelligence chiefs meetings.

Cooperation at ARF Level

More is happening in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in the counter-terrorism field than in ASEAN. In this context it is worth bearing in mind that the ARF covers 23 countries, including all the world's major powers. Indeed counter-terrorism has given the ARF a new lease of life. The 9th ARF meeting held in July 2002 in Brunei issued a Statement on Measures Against Terrorist Financing, committing member countries to implementing quickly measures that the United Nations had identified as mandatory to combating terrorist financing and to working with the relevant international bodies for the purpose.[28] The ministers agreed there would be meetings of senior officials to monitor compliance. They also decided to have an Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime.

Much of the good work is taking place in the Inter-Sessional Group on Confidence Building Measures. After the September 11 attacks two ISG meetings were scheduled, one in New Delhi, from 19–21 December 2001, and the other in Hanoi from 22–24 April 2002. Two workshops were held under the framework of ISGs — a Malaysia-US Workshop on Financial Measures Against Terrorism in Honolulu (24–26 March 2002) whose Statement was adopted by the 9th ARF Meeting in July 2002; and a Thailand-Australia Workshop on Prevention of Terrorism held in Bangkok 17–19 April 2002 whose recommendations were also adopted by the 9th ARF Meeting in July 2002.

A third workshop was held in Tokyo on 1–2 October 2002 focusing on counter-terrorism measures for major international events, since such events (for instance the 2002 FIFA World Cup Korea-Japan) can be vulnerable to terrorist attacks unless appropriate measures are taken. The workshop adopted a document "The Best Practices for Counter-Terrorism Measures in Major International Events".

Malaysia hosted the first Inter-Sessional Meeting on Border Security in Sabah, Malaysia, from 21–22 March 2003. Each workshop brings out the best practices in the area and also leads to valuable networking. Other useful workshops were planned, e.g., a Singapore-Australia one on managing

the consequences of terrorist attacks involving chemical, biological and radiation weapons. There are also ASEAN agreements or declarations with dialogue partners. An ASEAN-US Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism was signed in July 2002. The Declaration emphasises cooperation in intelligence exchange and capacity building through training, education, consultations, seminars and "joint operations as appropriate". This was followed in November 2002, at China's request, by the signing of the Joint Declaration between ASEAN and China on non-traditional security, including terrorism. The concrete anti-terrorist value of this document is questionable; it seemed more like a political gesture that ASEAN conceded to China after the Declaration with the US. Then, in January 2003, a Joint Declaration on Cooperation to Combat Terrorism was signed with the European Union. It emphasises in particular the importance of signing and implementing United Nations and other agreements relating to terrorism.

There have been other initiatives outside the ARF and ASEAN framework. For example, as a result of a joint US-Malaysia initiative, a regional counter-terrorism center was set up in Malaysia. There are also many international conferences and workshops that can help in capacity building by adopting best practices in the field. For instance on 21 January 2003 there was an international maritime and port security conference in Singapore which addressed complex issues related to the terrorist threat in the maritime sector.

Cooperation at the International/Multilateral Level

ASEAN countries recognise the importance of United Nations (UN) resolutions on terrorism. As required under UN Security Council Resolution 1373 of September 2001, they, like all other UN member states, have been submitting reports to the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee on what has been done in their countries to combat terrorism.

In the area of terrorist finance and money laundering, efforts are being made to improve financial, regulatory and enforcement systems. This is being done principally through the work of the Asia-Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). All ASEAN countries have membership or observer status on the APG whose secretariat is based in Australia. Singapore is the only one which is also a member of the FATF itself, with its more demanding requirements, including mutual surveillance. The work of APG has included technical assistance and capacity building, e.g., helping countries to put together the necessary legislative frameworks with assistance from the developed countries, especially Australia. For instance Indonesia,

with Australian assistance under the APG, recently established the Financial Intelligence Unit located in the Central Bank.

There are also other forums through which expertise is transmitted. A workshop on Counter-Terrorism and Finance was held in Singapore from 21–22 January 2003. Organised jointly by Singapore and the US, it was attended by senior officials from foreign ministries, law enforcement and financial regulatory agencies of more than 20 countries in ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum. It dealt with the issue of compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1373 and the recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on terrorist financing, as well as examined ways to reinforce the counter-terrorism finance capabilities of domestic institutions. Included in the proceedings was a special session on money laundering.

Conclusion

The fight against terrorism in the ASEAN region has clearly intensified and significant advances have been made since 11 September 2001. But much still needs to be done. It is in the region's own vital interest that it be seen in the outside world as safe for tourists and investors. For this image to take root, ASEAN countries have to demonstrate the political will to fight terrorism and undertake all the necessary measures to do so.

Sub-regional and regional co-operation against terrorism has been stepped up. At the sub-regional level intelligence cooperation between states on the common terrorist threat has increased sharply. At the ASEAN level anti-terrorism cooperation in the AMMTC has accelerated. Much is also going on in the ARF and with dialogues partners for capacity building from best practices. At the international level ASEAN countries have been working with the FATF or the APG to deal with the complex problems associated with terrorist financing and money laundering.

Yet all this has to translate into effective anti-terrorist action at the crucial national level. There the political will and the capacities vary. Singapore and Malaysia have demonstrated both the will and the capability to fight terrorism. Both have efficient security services and are able to develop new capacities rapidly. Indonesia presents a more mixed picture. After the Bali bombing, it has come out of its denial mode and has acted effectively to uncover and disrupt the part of the JI network responsible for the Bali bombing. But it is not clear if the political will exists to undertake comprehensive security action against other parts of the network, especially in view of the elections in 2004. The Philippines also presents a mixed picture. It has demonstrated the will to

fight terrorism and a willingness to seek American assistance, but has capacity shortcomings and faces complex and difficult problems in the south of the country that are not amenable to an easy solution. Thailand which was a weak link in the region's anti-terror war, is beginning to act, though slowly and cautiously.

Al Qaeda and its affiliated organisations have sought to use Muslim communities, wherever they might be, for sanctuary, ideological indoctrination or recruitment as fighters for their global *jihad* cause. Cambodia's Cham Muslim community had for some time been seen by security officials in the region as a potential target, in view of reports that radical Muslims from abroad have been active among the community. The Cambodian government appears to be adopting a firm and vigilant stance on the matter as reflected in the crackdown in May 2003 on Islamic militancy in religious schools and mosques. An Egyptian and two Thai Muslims at a Saudi-financed Islamic school were detained and an arrest warrant was issued for a fourth person on suspected terrorist links. 28 Islamic teachers and their families, mostly from the Middle East and Africa were asked to leave the country. The authorities warned that more might be expelled.[29]

There have also been some indications of possible attempts to penetrate the Muslim Rohingya community in Myanmar's western Arakan state that has suffered persecution from the Myanmar authorities. Hambali is reported to have visited Myanmar in December 2002.[30]

In general, apart possibly from Singapore and Malaysia, socio-economic problems and institutional weaknesses remain causes for concern. Islamic revivalism in both Indonesia and Malaysia is bound to have an extremist fringe attracted to the ideas of Osama bin Laden. The importance of a comprehensive approach, especially political action, has been emphasised earlier. In particular, an ideology or an idea cannot be destroyed by police and intelligence action, and in the case of the Islamic terrorist threat the political and ideological response has to come primarily from Muslims themselves, though secular governments can facilitate the process.

Yet the importance of root causes within Southeast Asia should not be exaggerated. Socio-economic problems and institutional weaknesses are not causes of terrorism; they only provide terrorists and radicals with exploitable issues. Radical Islam in the region is largely an import from abroad, though it has taken some root in the region. The final outcome of the struggle against Islamic terrorism in Southeast Asia, for better or worse, may be determined to an important degree by events outside Southeast Asia, for example what happens to Al Qaeda and its acolytes in other parts of the world; what happens

within Islam on the global stage, especially in countries like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan; and how the Israel-Palestinian conflict plays out. The elimination of Al Qaeda's Afghan sanctuary and training ground has already been a tremendous help to the anti-terrorist efforts of Southeast Asian states, as has been the capture of key Al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan and elsewhere by American and other friendly security services.

Notes

1. For an analysis of the concepts of national resilience and regional resilience, see Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "National Versus Regional Resilience? An Indonesian Perspective", in Derek da Cunha, ed., *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Security* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002).
2. See Jusuf Wanandi, "Averting the Radical Muslim From Turning Terrorist", *The Straits Times*, 28 November 2002.
3. *The Straits Times*, 12 February 2003.
4. *The Straits Times*, 7 February 2003.
5. *The Straits Times*, 8 March 2003.
6. "Reports from Member States Pursuant to Paragraph 6 of Resolution 1373 (2001)", available at <www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1373/>.
7. For instance, the arrests arising from the bombings in Makassar in South Sulawesi province on 5 December 2002 on the eve of Hari Raya included at least one member of the Laskar Jundullah, a militia group that has known links with JI. (Its founder, Agus Dwikarna, has been jailed in the Philippines for possessing explosives.)
8. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 19 December 2002, p. 20.
9. These were among the points made in the report by the International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the *Jemaah Islamiyah* Terrorist Network Operates", 11 December 2002.
10. Presentation by Ulil Abshar Abdallah on the "The Challenge from Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia", delivered at the *2003 Regional Outlook Forum*, organised by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, on 7 January 2003.
11. Operation Bojinka envisaged the destruction of several American airliners over the Pacific and the assassination of the Pope during his visit to the Philippines.
12. See for instance the Singapore White Paper *The Jemaah Islamiyah Arrests and the Threat of Terrorism*. At least four JI detainees in Singapore had undergone military training by the MILF. Among the 18 JI members detained in Singapore in September 2002, three had deep associations with the MILF. They had taken the *bai'ah* before MILF chief Hashim Selamat. Because of such links, Singapore regards the MILF as a security threat to the Republic in its own right.

13. A CBS news item of 21 February 2003 reported that although a Department of National Defence report submitted to the Philippine Congress in 2002 had put the strength of the ASG at 250, down from 800 in 2001, the Philippines Chief of Staff, Gen. Dionisio Santiago, acknowledged on 5 February 2003 that a re-check of military documents and figures showed a number closer to 500, mostly on Jolo.
14. *The Straits Times*, 6 March 2003.
15. Discussions with security officials in the region.
16. A well-publicised example of this was the escape of ASG elements, together with their hostages from a hospital in Lamitan town in early June 2001 even though the hospital was supposedly surrounded by Philippine security forces. See Paul A. Rodell, "The Philippines: Gloria in Excelsis", *Southeast Asian Affairs 2002* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002), p. 229.
17. Discussions with security officials in the region.
18. See the White Paper published by the Singapore Ministry of Home Affairs in January 2003.
19. Discussions with security officials in the region.
20. "Thailand: In Denial", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 November 2002, p. 24.
21. For Al Qaeda's activities in Malaysia, see Rohan K. Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 194–198.
22. "Intelligence Failure: It Gets Worse", *The Economist*, 6 June 2002. Also see Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror*, p. 196.
23. "Declaration of Cooperation Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Malaysia on Cooperation to Combat Terrorism", signed 14 May 2002 in Washington DC.
24. See Singapore Government White Paper, p. 7.
25. "ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism", available at <www.aseansec.org/5318.htm>.
26. "Declaration on Terrorism by the 8th ASEAN Summit", available at <www.aseansec.org/13154.htm>.
27. "Joint Communique of the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism, Kuala Lumpur, 20–21 May 2002", available at <www.aseansec.org/ 5618.htm>.
28. "ARF Statement on Measures Against Terrorist Financing, 30 July 2002", available at <www.aseansec.org/12001.htm>.
29. Various media reports: *The Straits Times*, BBC World Service (Radio) and Radio Australia Asia-Pacific.
30. Conversations with regional security officials.

Chapter 10

Enhancing State Capacity and Legitimacy in the Counter-Terror War

Jose T. Almonte

September 11 Awakens ASEAN to the Terrorist Threat

In Southeast Asia, the successive shocks of September 11 and Bali have awakened political authorities to the reality of the Islamist[1] threat — which they had tended to discount, because Islam in the region, half a world away from the heartlands of orthodoxy, had always seemed more moderate than the Middle Eastern variety.

Brought not by conquering armies but by Sufi traders and missionaries, probably beginning in the twelfth century,[2] Islam in Southeast Asia has adapted easily to the great Asian religions which had preceded it there, as well as to an even older indigenous animism. Thus, while Indonesia is routinely described as the world's largest Muslim nation, for many of its people, "religion is a mixture of traditional mystical beliefs, Hindu-Buddhism and Islam".[3]

And while in the Arab world and in North Africa, secular authoritarians like Nasser of Egypt and Ben Bella of Algeria failed to deliver on their promises of bread and freedom, in Malaysia and Indonesia their counterparts have brought measurable benefits.

This failure of the post-independence generation of Arab leaders to organise the modernisation of their countries was a major factor in turning their peoples away from the orthodox political parties to religiously oriented ones. Not only did secular nationalism fail to deliver material development. To Islamist eyes, it also fragmented into distinct and often rival states the historical *darul Islam*.

In Southeast Asia, Suharto in Indonesia and Mahathir Mohamad in Malaysia opened their economies to the market system and to export-oriented growth. And in this strategy they were highly successful. Between 1970 and 1990 — according to World Bank estimates — absolute poverty in Malaysia declined from 18 percent to only two percent. In Indonesia, by the middle 1990s, individual incomes were more than three times higher than they were in the 1970s; and poverty declined from 60 percent in 1970 to only 11 percent in 1996.

Development has sharpened tension between tradition and modernisation

As elsewhere, of course, growth has also sharpened tensions between tradition and modernisation in Southeast Asia's multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies — stirring up resentments among those groups whom development has disadvantaged. The commercialisation of rural economies devastated the traditional farming-fishing communities and drove proletarianised Malay peasants to big-city squatter settlements. Competition between Malay and Chinese traders set off four major riots in Java in late 1996 and early 1997 — all directed at the ethnic Chinese who owned the shopping malls that were squeezing out Malay retail stores.

Over this last generation, "cultural" globalisation has also hit some poor countries harder than even economic globalisation. Even in poor countries which have experienced only limited growth in foreign trade, American customs and values — the dominant strains in the intrusive internationalist culture — are fast-spreading, especially among the youth; and traditionalist people see these cultural imports as threatening values and ways of life to which they are accustomed.

Ideological influences from the Middle East

This perception among Southeast Asian believers that Muslim society is endangered has been intensified by ideological influences from the Middle East. Not only have Wahhabi clerics allied to the Saudi Arabian ruling elite been using

Islamic charity as a cover to support Muslim militancy all over the world. Over this last generation, the Middle East has been in political-religious ferment set off by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Iranian Revolution, and the Russian intervention in Afghanistan. In addition, the Gulf War against Iraq brought the American military presence into Saudi Arabia — desecrating, in Islamist eyes, Mecca and Medina, the Holy Places of Islam.

The "holy war" against the atheistic Soviet Union aroused religious nationalism throughout the Muslim world. It also gave thousands of Muslim militants from 25 countries hands-on experience of cutting-edge weaponry; and training in terrorist tradecraft. Most of all, the decade-long conflict gave the "holy warriors" the emotional uplift of having brought down a superpower. Hundreds of Asian mujahidin from Burma, Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, and the Philippines — some of them recruited, ironically enough, by the Central Intelligence Agency — returned home to stiffen the spine of the region's Islamist rebellions and to lead its terrorist groupings.

State terror, too, has helped form the character of Southeast Asia's Islamist movements. The stifling of political dissent by authoritarian governments has enabled Islamism to fill the resulting vacuum in public discourse. In Suharto-era Indonesia, the suppression of party politics and of Islamist fundamentalism politicised religion and almost every other institution of civil society. Persecutions, arbitrary arrests, and military violence against those who opposed the regime both radicalised Islamist leaders and spread their influence to other Southeast Asian Muslim communities, where some of them fled to escape detention and state terror.

In the Philippines, the proclamation of martial law by the strongman Ferdinand E. Marcos in 1972 confirmed the Muslim communities of Mindanao and Sulu in their resistance to the "imperial" — and "Christian" — Philippine State they had been fighting, off and on, for three centuries. Under authoritarian rule, local conflicts over land rights between Muslim communities and "Christian" migrants — similar to those raging in eastern Indonesia — became outright secessionist rebellions. These were led initially by the secularist MNLF or Moro[4] National Liberation Front (whose leaders had affinities with the radical students of the insurgent Maoist Communist Party) and then, after the MNLF had exhausted itself, by the Islamist MILF or Moro Islamic Liberation Front (of which the Abu Sayyaf terrorists are a splinter group).

In Malaysia, Islamist opposition to Mahathir's secularist UMNO (United Malays National Organisation) — which rules in a multiracial coalition with the economically-dominant Chinese minority — centres on PAS, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party, which governs two relatively underdeveloped states

in the Federation. In recent years, PAS has been radicalised by Malaysian veterans of the Afghan War and by students returning from religious schools in the Indian subcontinent. The influence of Islamist refugees from Suharto's Indonesia — most prominently that of the radical cleric Abu Bakar Bashir — has apparently also been significant.

In southern Thailand, Muslim separatism in the post-war period has been largely extinguished — although sporadic bombings there in 1993 and 2001 indicate terrorist remnants may still be actively fighting for a "Pattani Republic".

Thus, well before Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda global terrorist movement blasted their way into worldwide notoriety, Islamist movements of various types were operating in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the southern Philippines and southern Thailand. Secularisation as a process divides the components of human society — politics, religion, economy, culture — into separate fields of discourse. Islamists reject this detachment of the state from its religious foundations.[5] They regard Islam as a complete and total system and deny the need to look outside it for a basis of the social order.

And since in their view religion is all embracing, all disputes ultimately turn into religious conflicts. This is how secular disputes — over land rights, rivalries over jobs and livelihoods, commercial competition among Malays and Chinese and the grievances of Muslim minorities in the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and Singapore — have become transmuted into implacable conflicts which must all be fought to the death.

A central intelligence unifying Islamist groups

Over these past few years, a central intelligence seems to have succeeded in unifying some of these home grown, Islamist movements into a "regional" network. Certainly there is relatively new evidence of more than casual cross-border cooperation among these local Islamist groups. Heightened post-September 11 intelligence gathering by authorities in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia — and, more recently, Australia — has revealed the presence of a regional network more closely-knit and more widespread than the governments had thought existed.

The hard evidence includes Malaysian Islamists training Singaporeans and carrying out terrorist activities in Indonesia; Filipino terrorists kidnapping western tourists from a Malaysian resort; and Indonesians bombing the Philippine Embassy in Jakarta (in August 2000) and helping bomb a Manila

commuter train (in December 2000). As for Singapore Islamists, tithes on their incomes seem to have financed terrorist activities in other states.

The MILF apparently has a key role in this regional Islamist network. Its camps scattered around western Mindanao have apparently trained Indonesians, Singaporeans and other nationals. From 1997 until 1999, Indonesians were reportedly allowed to run their own facility inside Camp Abu Bakar, the main MILF base. Another camp, in Malaysia, trained Singaporeans: 14 of the 21 suspected terrorists detained by Singapore in August 2002 apparently went there.

Members of an organisation called Jemaah Islamiyah ("Islamic Community") have been arrested in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. They apparently envision one Islamic state — embracing Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, the Mindanao-Sulu region of the Philippines, and southern Thailand — arising from the racial, religious, and ethnic conflicts they seek to foment. Singapore and Malaysian authorities say the Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist network is headed by the Indonesian Abu Bakar Bashir. Apparently a central committee composed of representatives of the national Islamist groupings — including the MILF and the Muslim group based in southern Thailand — ensure cross-border cooperation in efforts to raise arms and money, train militants, and carry out joint attacks.

Bashir — who runs a religious boarding school in Central Java and heads an above-ground federation urging an Islamic state on Indonesia — was himself apparently radicalised by repression against the Muslim right initiated by the Suharto regime, preparatory to holding the first parliamentary elections under authoritarian rule. Detained from 1978 until 1982, Bashir fled to Malaysia three years later to escape being re-arrested. In the Federation, he and his followers spread their influence among Malaysian Islamists already confirmed in their opposition to the more worldly UMNO by veterans of the Afghan War and by students returning from religious schools in India and Pakistan.

Malaysia during that period was apparently a gathering place for Islamist groupings from all over the world. Two of the suicide terrorists who attacked the World Trade Centre were sighted there in early 2000. It may have been during this period that the Southeast Asian Islamists started linking up their local groupings.

Before the Bali bombings that in middle October 2002 killed some 200 people — most of them young Australians, British, and other Westerners on vacation — the Indonesian government had refused even to question Bashir, saying that arresting him then would merely create a Muslim martyr. But Jakarta has since then announced it would charge him with treason

and with complicity in a series of bomb attacks on Indonesian churches on Christmas eve in December 2000.[6] A presidential decree imposing tough sanctions against terrorists — and allowing their detention without trial — has also been issued. President Megawati Sukarnoputri has even taken steps to unify the country's intelligence agencies under the head of the National Intelligence Agency, Hendropriyono; and to open them to cooperation with their counterparts in neighbouring countries and with the United States.

A recent paper by the International Crisis Group[7] suggests that students of Bashir's "Ngruki Network" — named after the village near Surakarta (Solo) where Bashir's religious boarding school is located — may make up the core of Southeast Asia's cross-border Islamist network. But proving Bashir's links to Southeast Asian terrorism will be difficult to do. In the Indonesian archipelago, Jemaah Islamiyahs are scattered religious communities meant to coalesce eventually into one Islamic state. While over these past 20 years Bashir has been associated with these religious communities — whose teachings have both a religious and a political content — only very few of these groupings are also terrorist. Many devout Indonesian Muslims would admit to membership in local Jemaah Islamiyahs — some of whose leaders have heroic political reputations won during the Suharto regime.

Al Qaeda connections in Southeast Asia

How is Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda connected to the Southeast Asian Islamist networks?

The American government is convinced it has enough evidence to prove Al Qaeda is using Jemaah Islamiyah to foment Islamist extremism in the region. The Bali bombings — which for the first time targeted Western tourists — appears to bear out this theory. Until now, disturbances traced to Islamist groupings have all been on behalf of local causes.

Certainly the Southeast Asian cells must have welcomed Al Qaeda's help in raising funds, acquiring explosives and weapons, training militants, and widening regional contacts. Some of these local cells may have been associated with Al Qaeda since the late 1980s — when Islamic feeling was at fever-pitch over the confrontation with communism in Afghanistan. Certainly, too, the region has become crucial to Al Qaeda — as an alternative base and training ground, particularly now that its Middle East cells have been scattered.

A young Indonesian Islamist cleric, Riduan Isamuddin, also known as Hambali, an associate of Bashir, is reputed to have linked Jemaah Islamiyah to the Al Qaeda network in the 1990s. Singapore intelligence says Hambali, an Afghan War veteran, was accepted into Osama bin Laden's inner

circle — apparently a rare honour accorded a non-Arab — and was responsible for planning several bombing attacks in Southeast Asia. As early as 1993, Al Qaeda may have sent Ramzi Yousef — who had organised the car-bombing of the World Trade Centre in February of that year — to the Philippines, to teach the Abu Sayyaf terrorists the use of sophisticated high explosives.

By 1995 Al Qaeda was apparently running a training camp inside the MILF's Camp Abu Bakar in Maguindanao Province. During 1996–1998, "over 1,000 Indonesian mujahidin" are said to have trained there. A second Al Qaeda camp was located elsewhere in the same area of Mindanao. In 1988, according to US intelligence, bin Laden sent his brother-in-law, Mohammed Jamal Khalifa, to Sulu to recruit mujahidin. In February 1999, Western intelligence monitored phone calls between Al Qaeda and the MILF, in which the latter was asked to set up additional training camps for Al Qaeda operatives. At the time, Al Qaeda was hard-pressed in the Middle East, after having bombed the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

The training camps were moved to Indonesia after the attacks on the MILF camps, ordered by President Joseph Estrada, in July 2000. The attack in return on the Philippine ambassador's residence in Jakarta — which killed two persons and injured 21 others, including the ambassador himself — may have been carried out by Al Qaeda operatives directly (actually carried out by JI — Editors).

The MILF has denied links with Al Qaeda, but has admitted receiving "foreign visitors" at its base in Mindanao. But Philippine intelligence say MILF links with Al Qaeda date back to the late 1980s, when the MILF sent an estimated thousand fighters to Afghanistan. And since the early 1990s, the MILF was apparently in touch with a bin Laden lieutenant, Abu Zubayda, who later moved to Indonesia as Al Qaeda's senior representative in Southeast Asia.

Omar Al-Faruq, an Al Qaeda agent in American hands, has apparently admitted Al Qaeda's responsibility for a series of church bombings in Indonesia — which it set off to incite a religious civil war. Since 1999, at least 7,000 people have been killed in Muslim–Christian clashes in the Maluku islands and in Central Sulawesi province alone. Omar's confession also apparently foiled a truck-bomb attack on the US embassy in Jakarta, planned to mark the first anniversary, in 2002, of the September 11 attacks.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the ASEAN Response to Terrorism

Almost as soon as the United States began organising its global anti-terrorist coalition, the Philippines initiated an anti-terrorist pact with Indonesia and

Malaysia. The three-power agreement, signed on 7 May 2002 in Kuala Lumpur, binds the three Malay states to carrying out joint exercises to fight terrorism and other crimes; sharing airline passenger lists; setting up telephone hotlines; and tightening control of their borders. Cambodia, Thailand and Brunei have since acceded to the agreement. The partners cooperate informally with Singapore and the United States.

In Brunei in August 2002, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) agreed to freeze the financial assets of terrorist groups. At the ARF meetings, the 10 ASEAN states and the United States also agreed to share information on terrorist activities, develop together more effective counter-terrorism policies, and enhance liaison among their law enforcement agencies.

For Washington, an early dividend from its informal cooperation with the Malay states is the Al Qaeda operative Omar Al-Faruq, whom the Indonesians turned over to the CIA. But the Southeast Asian governments continue to treat their home grown Islamists cautiously — being concerned primarily with the threat of separatism, political instability, and social upheaval, as well as their own political fortunes. Indeed the Indonesian security intellectual, Jusuf Wanandi, had described President Megawati's government as "in denial for too long" regarding the presence of global terrorism in the country.[8]

Although Mrs. Megawati's intelligence services had warned about the risks in not facing up to the extremists, her political advisers were said to fear that a crackdown would expose her to attack by Muslim politicians, starting with the vice president, Hamzah Haz.[9]

Since then, however, Jakarta has allowed Washington to declare Jemaah Islamiyah a terrorist organisation; and Manila has accepted high-visibility American help in subduing the proscribed Abu Sayyaf gang. But President Arroyo has so far prevented Washington from blacklisting the MILF, whom she is trying to wean away from its Al Qaeda connections. She has however happily allowed the Americans to proscribe the Maoist Communist Party and its "New People's Army" guerrillas.

Governments fear further radicalisation

The common fear of the Southeast Asian governments is that too-aggressive prosecution of the anti-terrorist campaign would progressively radicalise more and more of the disparate groupings that make up Southeast Asian Islam. Yet historical experience suggests that religious violence is best suppressed quickly, ruthlessly — and justly. Any lack of official resolve at the outset is liable

to worsen the situation. For government's failure to damp down religious violence before it spreads too widely could encourage agitators and terrorists to even greater effort — and lead the country down the slippery slope to communal violence and social chaos.

Then also, as elsewhere, the Third World government that appears too pliable to US interventionism risks alienating its nationalist middle class. But an anti-American backlash is difficult to avoid — given the enlarged US role in the world envisioned by the Bush Administration's "National Security Strategy". Not only would America promote global peace and order. To prevent weak states from failing, it would also promote liberty and justice, democracy and development globally. This means — unavoidably — US interventionism in the internal workings of Southeast Asian societies in the years immediately ahead.

At the moment, anxieties about the Iraq war have raised anti-American sentiments throughout the region. Even the usually gung ho Filipinos wanted their country to stay neutral in the campaign to overthrow Saddam Hussein. Among the region's believers, the Bush Administration's muscular foreign policy is provoking an upsurge of religious nationalism, as ordinary Muslims reassert pride in their faith.

Washington's policies may unwittingly be giving the impression it is hostile toward Islam both as a religion and as a culture. And this impression is being abetted by the growing consensus among conservative American intellectuals that it is not only Islamist terrorism but militant Islam as a whole which is the real enemy. Malaysia's Mahathir sees the extremists on both sides as gaining strength. If the American mid-term election results in November 2002 were a vote of confidence in the Bush Administration, Mahathir says, there has also been a corresponding build-up of support for religiously oriented parties in recent elections in Pakistan, Bahrain, Morocco, and Turkey. And he foresees increasing confrontation, "Both sides are going to play up their anger and hatred to the maximum. So we're going to see a world which is not going to be very calm."

Weak states hospitable to terrorist networks

At the time of writing, the anti-terrorist campaign is sharpening the contrast between the strong states of Singapore and Malaysia and their relatively weaker counterparts in Indonesia and the Philippines. Singapore and Malaysia have come down hard on the networks in their territories. Tough Internal Security Acts held over from the colonial period have allowed the neighbour-states

between them to round up close to a hundred terrorist-suspects. Singapore has also foiled plots to bomb Western embassies and to attack American warships in the Malacca Straits. The Singapore government is considered to have by far the best intelligence network and security apparatus in Southeast Asia.[10]

Filipino intelligence officers had actually been the first to break up an Al Qaeda operation in Southeast Asia in January 1995. This was the grandiose plot, masterminded by Ramzi Yousef, to destroy 11 American jumbo jets all at the same time, using tiny nitro-glycerine bombs; and to assassinate Pope John Paul II during his visit to Manila. The plot was discovered accidentally, when a small fire started in the Manila apartment where the terrorists were mixing explosive chemicals in a cooking pot.[11] But like Indonesia, the country is a good place for terrorists to burrow in — because of its long and porous coastline; its weak state; its economic distress; its communal strife; and its permissive political and social climate.

Rising support for Islamist policies in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the perceived collapse of moral values are multiplying the number of those Indonesians who see Quranic laws as the universal cure for their country's economic and social ills. Proposals to implement *shariah* laws and impose corporal punishment for criminal offences are increasingly appealing — not only to ordinary people but also to urban, educated Muslim elites.

Jakarta opinion polls show rising support for Islamist policies. Already religious-oriented parties control about a fourth of Parliament. And some local governments — which have recently been awarded more autonomy — have been persuaded to enact local rules derived from Islamic law against alcohol, gambling, pornography and prostitution. President Megawati is apparently regarded as insufficiently devout. Moreover, her coalition government's approach to Islamism is largely shaped by her vice president, Hamzah Haz, who leads the largest Muslim political party.

Fortunately a backlash against Islamism also seems to be building up in Southeast Asia's pluralist societies. Thus Prime Minister Mahathir has easily outflanked PAS and rallied Malaysia's Chinese and Indian minorities as well as secularist Muslims to his side, while in Indonesia the moderate Muslim groupings, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, have begun to speak out on behalf of a tolerant Indonesian Islam, which the country's founding fathers have preserved — through war and peace — for half a century. The support of these large (their combined membership is 70 million) and well-established organisations recently enabled secularist parliamentarians to defeat a proposal

to amend the Constitution to allow the full imposition of Quranic law on all Indonesian Muslims.

Governments conciliating rebellions with autonomy

Their scattered rebellions the Southeast Asian governments have been trying to conciliate with generous grants of autonomy. For instance, the "special autonomy" Jakarta has offered Aceh Province — where a separatist rebellion has raged since 1953 — will redistribute in Aceh's favour royalties from its oil-and-natural-gas resources — four-fifths of which the central government used to appropriate. A cease-fire was recently organised in Aceh, under an agreement brokered by a Swiss non-government organisation between Jakarta and GAM (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka), the independence movement in Aceh. (The ceasefire ended in May 2003 — Editors).

In Mindanao a peace agreement the Ramos Administration signed in 1966 with the MNLF still holds; and in early 2003 President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was on the verge of concluding one with the MILF. An Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao is in place; and Manila is channelling all the extra money it can raise (largely from official development aid) into public health, basic education and physical infrastructure for the Muslim provinces. Decades of neglect — not only by an indifferent Manila but also by their own chiefly families — have made its Muslim provinces among the poorest in the Philippines. The average life expectancy in the Autonomous Region is fully nine years shorter than the national average. In reaction, Muslim intellectuals now demand from Manila some degree of "compensatory justice" for this historical discrimination and neglect.

Seeing Terrorism Whole

For both Washington and the Southeast Asian governments, the key is how to devise a strategy that defeats Islamist terrorism without alienating ordinary Muslims. Certainly the allies must have by now realised how inadequate a primarily military-operational strategy can be. Pulling out the roots of global terrorism will unavoidably involve an effort that is diplomatic, political, economic, financial and cultural as well. Political stability based on strongman rule — such as that which Suharto enforced in Indonesia or Marcos imposed on the Philippines — is impossible to sustain. Rigid authoritarian systems cannot withstand the shocks of change shaking up our world today.

Beyond the campaign against terrorism, the global coalition must work to ensure that open societies flourish in the Muslim world — so that Islamism

does not become the only way for people to express their social grievances. The Bush Administration's security strategy commits America to doing all these. But if that strategy is to work, Washington should regard its anti-terrorism policy as a whole.

Certainly Washington cannot continue to separate its policy on Israel and Palestine from its approach to the Muslim peoples. Recent events have forged an unprecedented unity of Arab and Muslim opinion. Nor can Washington promote economic development in the poor countries while also aggressively subsidising American agriculture. Right now there is a notable lack of fit between America's foreign policy and its internal politics — a discrepancy which comes partly from the Executive Branch's efforts to co-exist with its parochial and conservative Congress.

Washington hardliners pride themselves in their tough-minded approach to the world as it is. Toughness has its place, but toughness is not enough. The global coalition America leads must aim not merely to defeat terrorism. It must also see to the other side of the coin of security — which is the people's well being. And it must win people's allegiance by the power of its values and its ideals.

ASEAN coordination still largely on paper

At the regional level, coordination on counter-terrorism among the ASEAN states still exists largely on paper. Formally it is a matter only for the five states that subscribe to the Kuala Lumpur agreement; and they have set up a committee to "fine-tune multilateral responses to terrorism". While security chiefs have noted the need for a regional centre where intelligence could be assessed and shared, and national strategies coordinated, an agreement among the three Malay states to set up a Regional Counter-Terrorism Centre in Kuala Lumpur by November 2002 still has not been carried out.

Already the lack of coordination is responsible for minor tragedies that are being enacted, as border controls are tightened up in a region where national frontiers have always been porous. For instance, the deportation of undocumented migrants from Borneo and peninsular Malaysia has uprooted thousands of nominal Filipinos and Indonesians who have, for centuries, customarily moved freely through this great inland sea which is Southeast Asia's maritime heartland.

Separate local movements from international terrorists

Another object lesson the rise of Islamism has taught is that Southeast Asian governments should deal with secular conflicts (such as those over land rights

and claims to livelihood) between ethnic and religious groups in their pluralistic national communities promptly, decisively and equitably. Once these secular — and therefore limited — conflicts degenerate into religious issues, they become much harder to settle through negotiation and compromise. Religion and politics must be separated in the interest of ensuring civil peace.

Attending promptly to these local conflicts also pre-empts the meddling of transnational agitators like Osama bin Laden. Association with Al Qaeda may give rebellious local groupings the emotional lift of being the spearhead of a militant global movement. But, since Al Qaeda has no reasonable political agenda, the association submerges the practical and achievable demands with which the local movements began in utopian goals that no government can conceivably grant.

For their part, Southeast Asian governments need to approach their Islamist movements in terms of the component grievances which had started them off. Even the fanatic *Darul Islam* rebellions in post-independence Indonesia began in the reluctance of charismatic militia commanders from purist Muslim backgrounds to surrender their authority to the new and secular central government. These local grievances are amenable to negotiations and political solutions. The apocalyptic goals of bin Laden are not.

And this is the distinction the Arroyo Administration in the Philippines is trying to make. While it is throwing everything it has got against the Abu Sayyaf irreconcilables, it is treating the MILF as a rational adversary with practical demands — a policy supported by the moderate Organisation of the Islamic Conference — and slowly beginning to deal with its everyday grievances.

Governments must get the moderates on their side

While trying to cope with their Islamist radicals, the Southeast Asian governments must also keep in mind the situation of their Muslim moderates. As the conflict between government and the Islamists intensifies, the moderates are going to be squeezed between the opposing forces. Anti-terrorist policy should give a thought to shoring up the moderate Muslim parties and encouraging moderates in national society to stand up against the terrorists, as many of Jakarta's Muslim intellectuals have started to do.

To merit the support of its moderates, government must adhere as far as possible to democratic principle and practice while carrying out its anti-terrorist campaign. Thus the intellectual Jusuf Wanandi does not agree Indonesia should adopt the internal security laws of Singapore and Malaysia.

And the leading politician Amien Rais, chairman of the National Assembly and a former leader of Muhammadiyah, insists "it would be a fatal error to believe that our nascent Indonesian democracy must be sacrificed to restore order and good government. This would hand the extremists a powerful weapon and a potent argument in the struggle for the allegiance of our people".[12]

The military as an ally in the reform and modernisation of Muslim societies

Almost everywhere in the Third World, the military is an essential ingredient in the making of modern nations. Soldiers provide the ballast of social stability that poor countries need while they try to modernise their economies and empower their peoples. In the Muslim world, the military in addition has a principal role in the effort to keep down the Islamists and preserve the secular state. In Turkey, it defends Kemal Ataturk's fiercely secularist legacy. In Algeria, its intervention prevented the election of Islamist extremists. In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf's 1999 coup reversed the country's descent into Islamist theocracy. In Iran, the military will ultimately arbitrate the intensifying struggle between the students and the Shiite hierarchy.

In Indonesia, the military has had a poor human rights record during the country's three decades of authoritarian rule. But it is the only coherent secularist organisation with a national presence down to village level. Thus it is indispensable in helping Indonesia's reformist leaders keep the archipelago together, and in bridging the unavoidable period of instability every modernising country must come through. That Washington has recognised its value in the counter-terrorist campaign is implicit in the Pentagon's efforts to renew cooperative relations with the Indonesian officer corps that were cut in the aftermath of the independence movement in East Timor.

Mahathir's Malaysia a model of moderate Islam

Just as the bulk of Catholics now live not in Europe but in South America and in Africa, so do the majority of Muslims today live not in the Middle East but in Asia. In population terms, Southeast and South Asia are the emerging heartlands of Islam. And Malaysia can believably offer itself as the model of a moderate Muslim state — the model of Muslim modernity. Even its opposition party, PAS, "is by international standards a pretty mild sort of fundamentalist party".[13]

A majority of Malaysians are Muslims; officially, Malaysia is an "Islamic country", and to be Muslim (which is synonymous with being "Malay")

has always been to be privileged. Even British colonial policy had safeguarded communal Malay village lands from being alienated. And Prime Minister Mahathir has been successful in redefining the meaning, content, and expression of Islam in terms compatible with modernity, progress and economic prosperity. As the writer Michael Backman has noted, "Mahathir's Malaysia shows that it is possible to be both Muslim and modern, to be pro-development and outward-looking. It shows how Islamic society can accommodate other beliefs and other ideas."

As a young politician, Mahathir had demanded a greater stake in the economy for the Malays and preference for their language and culture. Those views got him expelled from UMNO in 1969, but the racial riots of that year — and the leadership's subsequent decision to bring up the Malays economically and socially — brought him back to power. By 1981 Mahathir was Prime Minister, and since then he has nurtured the economy through periods of sustained growth often hitting eight percent a year. Even more important, he has maintained a measure of racial harmony, by social policies that have raised the *bumiputra* ("sons of the soil") share of the country's wealth from 2.4 percent in 1971 to an estimated 30 percent at the turn of the century.

Mahathir's programmes for fighting extremism — by regulating private religious instruction, reforming public education, dismantling the social privileges of the Malay majority, and imposing national service on all young male Malaysians — are worthwhile models for other pluralist societies seeking to weave their populations into true national communities.

At the moment religious schools in the country are so loosely regulated that their actual number and enrolment figures are uncertain; no license is required to open one. As in Indonesia and Mindanao-Sulu, some of them have become breeding places for Islamism. Meanwhile the switch to the Malay language as a medium of instruction has driven the country's ethnic Chinese from the national schools. To attract them back into the system, Mahathir plans to restore English to national schools; meanwhile mandatory national service would force the 300,000 Malaysians who turn 18 every year to mix together.[14]

For Mindanao-Sulu, the Philippine Business for Social Progress, a leading NGO, has proposed a "catch-up" programme that would bring up social services such as primary health care, basic education and poverty alleviation measures in ARMM to the level of the country's other regions. Muslim Filipino intellectuals themselves insist that Moro autonomy must include the capability to overcome the crippling effects of their people's depressed and unjust condition. It would become meaningful only if the ARMM can become

self-sustaining and independent of the central government — instead of depending on handouts from Manila, as it does now.

Making Terrorism Irrelevant

The global community's campaign against terrorism is liable to be a war of decades. Instead of being swift and surgical, it is liable to be protracted, brutal, and complex. The Singapore government, for one, believes that even if the United States dismantles Al Qaeda, radical Islamic groups in Southeast Asia will be capable of further terrorist acts like the Bali bombings of October 2002 — for a long time to come. In Indonesia alone, there may be as many as 5,000 Islamic extremists, all of them potential recruits for terrorist acts.[15]

Washington says terrorism cannot win. And Washington is right: Islamist terrorism cannot win. Because Islamism leads only down a blind alley: it offers no real alternative to the failure of modernism in Muslim society. But neither can terrorism be defeated — because envy, resentment, anger and despair are part of our human nature. These are primal human drives — and it is not rational goals but these deep and strong urges that compel terrorists to act. And we can never hope to drain the swamp of dark human emotions which breeds them. This is why preventing future September 11s is a forlorn hope.

We must accept that, for as long as human nature is what it is, we cannot defeat terrorism. Ultimately the obstacle we must overcome is ourselves: the enemy we must defeat is within us. But we can strive to make terrorism irrelevant — by soothing the frustrations that make terrorists out of otherwise ordinary people. And, as Indonesia's foreign minister, N. Hassan Wirajuda, has remarked, "The worst that can happen to a terrorist is to be deprived of his cause, to be disrobed of his moral pretensions, to become irrelevant to the lives of those he claims to champion."

At bottom, Islamism is a rebellion of the excluded — a rebellion that feeds on the unfulfilled longings and desires of impoverished peoples living on the margins of an unattainable consumerist world. These frustrations we can ease by creating a more just world. These frustrations we can ease by alleviating global poverty and (in the words of President George W. Bush) by organising "[p]eace that favours human liberty . . . and encourages free and open societies on every continent".

This is why — like many other poor countries sympathetic to the anti-terrorist coalition's cause — we in the Philippines believe the global community must look beyond the war on terrorism — and deal once and for all with

the inequities spurring it. We must find a cooperative way to enable the world's poorest peoples to take part in humankind's adventure of development.

The conjunction between poverty and terrorism

Over these past 250 years, portions of the world have so improved their material condition that they find it hard to imagine how badly so many of their fellows still live. Yet, even now, one-quarter of all the people in the world still subsist on less than the equivalent of one American dollar a day. In 1998, the income gap between Switzerland and Mozambique — one of the richest and one of the poorest states — was estimated to be 400 to 1.

What is worse is that some countries are growing even poorer — relatively — and sometimes absolutely. Yet, given the information and communication revolution, it has also become more and more difficult to segregate poverty and wealth — to prevent the poor from realising the possibilities of modernisation. Ultimately, the peace and prosperity of the rich depend on the well being of all the poor.

What, then, is the conjunction between poverty and contemporary Islamist movements?

According to the French political scientists who were the first to study these movements systematically, the first Islamist cadres of the 1960s were rebelling against the conservative scholars whose religious teachings propped up the corrupt regimes of the Arab world of the time.

And in some places — notably in Egypt — these traditionalist regimes were indeed overthrown and replaced by nationalist, secular states — which then tried to organise development under various degrees of central planning and state intervention. It is the failure of this "Arab socialist" model which led the successor-generation of these Islamist pioneers — the "educated unemployed" of the Muslim world of the 1980s — to notions of cultural roots and identity.

What this new Islamist generation is looking for is not simply to return to the Muslim past — but to re-adapt modernity to their rediscovered identity: to offer their people access to the world of development and consumption under the rule of Islamic law. In this analysis, Islamism is not a reaction to the "modernisation" of Muslim societies but the product of its failure. And its militants are the casualties of the failure of these Muslim societies to deliver education, jobs, and development to their peoples.

"Islamism," says the French political philosopher Olivier Roy, "is above all a socio-cultural movement embodying the protest and frustration of a generation of youth that has not been integrated socially or politically" into stable and progressive national societies.[16]

Restraining the pace of headlong globalisation

Meanwhile, the headlong pace of globalisation is generating new frameworks of economic, political, and cultural interaction. Even in the relatively closed societies of the Muslim world, the impact of the international "pop" culture has been tremendous.

While every dominant civilisation has imposed its own version of modernity in its time, it is also true that a succession of universalising cultures — from Rome to Moscow — have come and gone without transforming national cultures. Every country is made unique by its past. But, over the short-term future, it is easy for "nationalists" to exaggerate the threat of the invasive foreign culture on cherished traditions and the national identity.

Just as the Southeast Asian peasant rebellions of the Great Depression in the 1930s were a response to an earlier episode of globalisation — the commercialisation of the regional economy under the impact of growing markets in the then-industrialising West — so is political Islam a response to secularist and consumerist societies being created by a new episode of globalisation.

Eventually, as in the past, a new balance will be found. And it is true that if the poor countries are to overcome their problems of economic development and political modernisation, they must integrate themselves into the global flow of trade and investment. But there is also a great deal to be said for our need to mitigate the impact of globalisation — by ensuring that the development it brings with it leaves no peoples behind.

If we are to create this more just world, we will need to cultivate a new global culture of mutual responsibility. Yes — the rich countries must help the poor; but the poor countries must also help themselves — by putting their own houses in order. The integration of poor countries in the global economic system generates its own liberating political effects. Our Muslim communities we must gently open to the market system, which stimulates the rise of democratic politics by setting off changes in the social fabric and in political culture.

We need to promote religious pluralism

Lastly — our countries must also promote the idea of religious pluralism — the idea that a faith can be nurtured without its having to claim for itself the exclusive truth. Certainly we can all reinterpret our faiths — without weakening our devotion — in ways that embrace modernity — for God's grace and compassion are not exhausted by any one faith.

There are no exclusivist religious visions — no religion possesses the exclusivist truth. God welcomes human beings who approach Him through their own history, their own language, their own heritage. Here in Southeast Asia, we must all learn to create space in our cultures for alternative faiths and even for secularism. Religious pluralism too is a vital ingredient of the world we need to organise for those who will come after us — a world more fair, a world more just, than this one in which we ourselves live.

How effective have the Southeast Asian governments been in their anti-terrorist campaign? It is too early to tell: the region's experience with multinational terrorism is so new that its states are still groping for counter-strategies of their own. ASEAN as a whole is until now largely unengaged: cooperation seems largely at intelligence-agency level, although it is already clear that the heads of government themselves must eventually lead a unified and cooperative approach, aimed not only at Al Qaeda's regional infrastructure and its home-grown support organisations but also at the grievances and frustrations that make terrorists out of otherwise ordinary people.

In the end, the effectiveness of the anti-terrorist effort will depend on the efficiency of the Southeast Asian state. Inept, corrupt, or repressive regimes merely fuel their own opposition. If they are to defeat terrorism and build genuine national communities, the region's governments must raise their political capacity. They must enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of their institutions — foremost among these the administrative bureaucracy, the national police, and the judicial system — if they are to organise the rational economies and the open societies that will move their peoples into the mainstream of modernisation.

Notes

1. I use "Islamist" in the way it is commonly used in the literature — to refer to those who see in Islam as much a political ideology as a religion.
2. A Filipino scholar has noted that, by the second half of the thirteenth century, Islam had begun to gain political power in the region. Cesar Adib Majul, "[R]ulers of Malaysian Principalities Were of the Faith or Had Recently Been Converted to It", *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973), p. 40.
3. Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia in the 1990s* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), p. 166.
4. Its young rebels had proudly adopted the pejorative name of Moro ("Moor") the Spaniards had given the Muslim Filipinos after the first Islamic peoples they had encountered in North Africa during the initial phase of Castilian expansion.

5. The religious rebellion against secularism is most pronounced in the Muslim world. But it is not confined there. Pentecostal Christians, no less than Buddhists and Hindus, reject the secularist ideology, which in their view has deconsecrated human life. Significantly, the rise of Islamist movements — beginning in the 1960s — coincided with the expansion of Christian evangelist and personalist religions, particularly among rural migrants and other newly urbanised peoples. In 1996, the South American Church reported losing 8,000 baptised Catholics daily to Pentecostal and "born-again" ministries.
6. *The Philippine Star*, 22 January 2003.
7. See *Indonesia Briefing*, International Crisis Group, Jakarta/Brussels, 8 August 2002: "Al Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia". The ICG is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation that seeks to prevent conflict through analysis, policy prescription, and advocacy.
8. *The International Herald Tribune*, 5 November 2002.
9. Angel M. Rabasa, *International Herald Tribune*, 31 October 2002.
10. *International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2003.
11. Simon Reeve, *The New Jackals*: *Ramzi Yousef*, *Osama bin Laden and the Future of Terrorism* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1999).
12. *The International Herald Tribune*, 5 November 2002.
13. Greg Sheridan, *Tigers: Leaders of the New Asia-Pacific* (St. Leonard's: Allen & Unwin, 1997).
14. *Far Eastern Economic Review,* 28 December 2002.
15. *The International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2003.
16. Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Taurus Publishers, 1994).

Chapter 11

Counter-Terror Cooperation in a Complex Security Environment

K. S. Nathan

Introduction: From the End of the Cold War to September 11 in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia as a subregion of the international political system became invariably intertwined in the politics of ideological conflict and superpower rivalry during the Cold War (1947–1991). The end of ideological conflict at the global level must necessarily produce implications for major, medium, and small powers at the regional (Asia-Pacific) and subregional (Southeast Asia/ASEAN) levels. With the decline of both internal and international communist movements and their sponsors, the focus shifted to issues related to governmental legitimacy, political and economic performance, human rights, and non-traditional threats to security — such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, and environmental degradation. However, at the military/strategic level, low intensity conflicts persisted, and will continue to persist because of ideological and religious groups that are discontented with the status quo.

The outbreak of the Asian Financial Crisis in mid-1997 exposed some of the structural weaknesses of the regional subsystem in terms of its capacity to manage and overcome financial chaos initiated by external forces such as

currency speculators. The interventions of the International Monetary Fund to bail out the devastated economies of Thailand and Indonesia in particular, and nationalistic efforts at currency and capital controls such as those introduced by Malaysia, helped stabilise the situation and to begin the process of economic recovery. In any event, the economic dislocations in the wake of the Asian Financial Crisis invariably impacted on the political dimension as well. Most significantly, the downfall of the 32-year Suharto regime in Indonesia unleashed internal forces that attempted to fill the political vacuum in the post-Suharto period. ASEAN's attempts to stave off the financial crisis and to resolve the security situation arising from the East Timor Crisis in 1998–2000 were less than successful, thereby pointing to institutional limitations in achieving regional solidarity over major economic, political and security issues. At the global level, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in Washington DC, the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, compelled the new Bush Administration to initiate major policy revisions in the direction of a more activist and interventionist role in world affairs.[1] This major change in US foreign policy has consequences for the post-September 11 strategic scenario in Southeast Asia, particularly from the angle of mutual perceptions of the nature of security threats and the efficacy of policy responses to the common threat of international terrorism.

11 September 2001: Impact on the Global and Regional Subsystems

An examination of the impact of September 11 on international relations also reveals the major features of the current international system and its principal architects. An astounded President Bush immediately unfolded the new architecture of the world order when he took a decisive stand, "Either you are with us or against us in the global war on terror." The major world powers: Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China, Japan and India, as well as medium powers such as Australia and Canada, unhesitatingly threw their support behind the American-led campaign against international terrorism. US-Russian relations improved significantly from Cold War rivalry to post-September 11 amity. Russia, which exercises hegemonic influence in most of the territories of the former Soviet Union, acceded to American requests to establish a military presence in Central Asia to facilitate the US-led military campaign to defeat the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Washington claimed that Taliban-led Afghanistan provided shelter and sponsorship to Saudi dissident Osama

bin Laden who is believed to have masterminded the terrorist attacks in the US. Within three months (October–December 2001), the US-led military campaign successfully dislodged the ultra-conservative and repressive Islamic regime, and installed a moderate leader named Hamid Karzai. This apparent success put the pressure on certain regimes thought to be harbouring or sponsoring Islamic militants whose primary goal was to destabilise secular regimes.

The impact on South Asia is particularly noteworthy. Pakistan's President, General Pervez Musharraf, was obliged by the emerging global and regional strategic scenario to disavow any links to Osama's Al Qaeda terrorist network, and more importantly, to distance himself from Kashmiri militants who have thus far been given training and sponsorship for operations against India. Despite the threat of being overthrown by Islamic forces opposed to his strategic alignment with the US by providing base facilities inside Pakistan for America's Afghan campaign, Musharraf steered his country through troubled times, and proved equal to the task of arresting and punishing Islamic extremists in his own country. The reward from the preponderant power in the international system was debt forgiveness and additional military and economic assistance to Pakistan — a country teetering on the brink of collapse as a failed state. Nevertheless, India-Pakistan relations have not improved, indeed worsened, as the two nuclear powers remain incapable of extricating themselves from the cauldron of uncompromising politics over Kashmir. Yet, it can be reasonably stated that external powers have been able to compel the two South Asian nuclear states to refrain from all-out war in favour of not undermining the global war on terror.

The global anti-terror coalition is spearheaded principally by the four Anglo-Saxon powers — the US, Britain, Australia and Canada — and supported by Russia, China, the Central Asian States, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, the European Union and ASEAN. Russia, China, and India had their own reasons for joining this Coalition. President Putin expected better understanding and sympathy for his war against the Chechen "terrorists", while also securing Moscow's interests in Europe especially *vis-à-vis* the NATO alliance. Beijing is concerned about the prospect of secession in its southern regions especially in Xinjiang province, where it fears a link-up of its Muslim separatists with Osama's Al Qaeda network. The Chinese leadership in Beijing assigns high priority to maintaining the territorial and national integrity of China, given that its sovereignty dispute over Taiwan remains unresolved. As for India, which has the second largest Muslim population after Indonesia, alignment with the United States helps elicit a more sympathetic Western

view of what New Delhi regards as cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistani-controlled areas of the disputed territory of Kashmir. This 54-year old unresolved dispute over Kashmir almost brought the two protagonists to the brink of war in the wake of the terrorist attack on India's Parliament on 13 December 2001. India blames Pakistan for the attacks that also triggered a full mobilisation of troops on both sides of the Line of Control dividing Indian and Pakistani-administered Kashmir. Despite the reduction in tension, an uneasy truce prevails in South Asia.

ASEAN Counter-Terrorism Cooperation: The Institutional Approach

ASEAN responded to September 11 through official declarations at Summit level, by strongly condemning the terrorist attacks, and pledging to work very closely with the United Nations and also the United States in organising a Global Coalition Against Terror. Malaysia, as a strong advocate of ASEAN-based regional cooperation, joined in the collective condemnation at the 7th ASEAN Summit (Brunei, 2001), and the 8th ASEAN Summit (Phnom Penh, 2002). The Brunei Summit issued a strong statement that the September 11 attack on the United States "was a direct challenge to the attainment of peace, progress and prosperity of ASEAN and the realisation of ASEAN Vision 2020".[2] Besides, the APEC Forum was another platform for ASEAN members to join forces with major global players like the United States, China, and Japan to condemn terror. The members of both fora attempted to implement United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1373, which was unanimously adopted on 28 September 2001. Resolution 1373 *inter alia* obliges all UN Member States to: (a) prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist acts, (b) criminalise the wilful provision or collection by their nationals of terrorist-related funds, (c) freeze without delay terrorist-related funds and other financial assets, economic resources or property that could be used for the commission of terror, (d) prohibit their nationals from making available funds, resources and facilities for the benefit of potential terrorists, and (e) engage in bilateral, regional, and multilateral cooperation to suppress international terrorism.[3]

Pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1373, ASEAN organised an Ad Hoc Experts Group meeting in Bali, Indonesia in January 2002 to implement the ASEAN Plan of Action to Combat Transnational Crime. Eights task forces were established aimed at combating: (1) terrorism, (2) trafficking in persons,

(3) arms smuggling, (4) sea piracy, (5) money laundering, (6) illicit drug trafficking, (7) international economic crime, and (8) cyber crime.

In addition, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the 23-member regional security consultative grouping, studied these issues at a workshop in April 2002 conducted under the auspices of the Thai and Australian Governments. Malaysia took a further step in hosting the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime in May 2002, in furtherance of Resolution 1373. Being also a leading member of the 57-nation Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Kuala Lumpur hosted an Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers on Terrorism in April 2002. However, Malaysia argued that state-based strategies and policies to combat terror must necessarily be premised on the formulation of an internationally agreed definition of terrorism. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad proposed that anyone who attacks civilians is a terrorist, and that acts of terror must include the attack on the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001, suicide bomb attacks by Palestinians, and the Tamil Tigers, attacks on civilians by Israeli security forces, and the killing of Bosnian Muslims.[4] The failure of the OIC meeting in Kuala Lumpur to reach a consensus on an acceptable definition of terrorism is highly suggestive of the problem itself. The more one tries to universalise its definition, the more likely that it will remain undefined for policy purposes, thereby forestalling collective action against terrorists. Arab and Middle Eastern OIC members withheld support for Mahathir's definition as it also branded the Palestinians as terrorists. They disagreed with Mahathir's concept on the grounds that the Palestinian struggle is aimed at regaining Arab land occupied by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.[5]

It would also appear that ASEAN's ineffectiveness as an institution in managing intra-regional problems such as the 1997 regional economic crisis, is further being evidenced by the ongoing bilateral spats between Malaysia and Singapore over two important issues: the pricing mechanism for future supply of water from Malaysia, and the contentious claim over a small offshore islet called Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih). A Singapore parliamentary session noted concerns expressed by members that these bilateral spats could further dilute the regional effort to fight the common enemy: terrorism. Singapore MPs claimed that Malaysian newspapers were making inflammatory statements accusing the republic of "stealing Pedra Branca like Israel stole from the Palestinians".[6] Both sides have accused each other of being unreasonable in their approach to bilateral issues.

Global and Regional Terror: The Malaysian Approach

For Malaysia and other ASEAN members, cooperation with the US should not be confined purely to the military dimension as the root causes of terrorism are multiple, and not stemming from religious compunctions alone. Malaysia concurred with the view presented by Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah on the US-ASEAN Accord to Combat Global Terror, emphasising that terrorism could not be wiped out with military might alone. It was also necessary to remove the frustration and resentment that made people join or associate with groups that promoted terrorism. Economic factors are very important in US-ASEAN cooperation against terrorism, hence trade and economic issues must be high on the agenda of the multifaceted relationship which Washington has with the region.[7]

The effectiveness of regional cooperation depends on national security perceptions and the pressures of domestic politics and interests. In the case of Malaysia, a fundamental concern of national security managers in the wake of September 11 is containing Islamic extremism within its borders. This goal has become all the more urgent after the 11 September 2001 exposés of possible Al Qaeda links with local and regional extremist/terrorist groups. The government has moved swiftly to arrest and detain over 70 suspected militants as a pre-emptive measure — to prevent planned terrorist attacks in the manner of Bali on 12 October 2002. This type of pre-emptive strategy could restrict the scope of legitimate action taken by civil society to curb governmental abuse. Yet, national security policy managers would, perhaps rightfully, assert that protection of the freedom and liberties of the overwhelming majority of the public should take priority over the freedom and fundamental liberties of the few who, given the opportunity, might deprive the whole society of its freedom to live free of terror.

The impact of counter-terror action by Malaysia can also be viewed in terms of the spill over effects in other spheres of the country's multi-ethnic mosaic. Apart from its value in putting terror-inclined religious militants out of action, the Internal Security Act enables the Government to deal with other types of "extremists", namely racial, ideological, language, cultural, and political advocates whose agendas and actions are deemed to be prejudicial to inter-ethnic harmony, social stability, and national unity. The government claims, on the basis of a proven track record, that Malaysia's success as a multi-ethnic and "Islamic" nation is the direct result of the ruling National Front Coalition's far-sighted policies based on moderation in all spheres of life. Communism as a radical ideology was defeated by this multi-pronged

comprehensive approach to development and stability — a strategy that is now being challenged by Islamic radicalism, militancy, and extremism. Indeed, post-September 11, the Mahathir administration has been emboldened to take stern measures to restore the "status quo" in the religious sphere, such as strictly enforcing the constitutional provisions for Islam as the official religion and arresting the momentum toward the creation of an "Islamic state".

Indeed, the Islamic state debate in Malaysia has thrown up innumerable opportunities for Islamists of different orientations from near and far to link up and consolidate their cherished goal of setting up an Islamic nation encompassing southern Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and southern Philippines. The focal point in the ASEAN region for this grandiose design is the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), whose operational structures in Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines have been seriously disrupted by governmental anti-terror action. The regional Al Qaeda operatives (JI and KMM or Kumpulan Militan Malaysia, initially known as Kumpulan Militan Malaysia) have thus far failed in their attempt "to destroy the precarious work of post-colonial nation building in Southeast Asia with an Islamic arrangement . . . ".[8] Other than the arms heist carried out by the deviant religious sect Al-Maunah in Perak, Malaysia in July 2000, the country has been relatively very safe from religious terrorists — largely due to pre-emptive action and police and intelligence cooperation with ASEAN neighbours, and with Malaysia's partners under the Five Power Defence Arrangements Framework, namely Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and Britain, and also with the United States through the bilateral US-Malaysia Anti-Terrorism Pact signed in May 2002.

Malaysia's anti-terror strategy involves the adoption of certain domestic measures aimed at revamping Islamic religious education with the aim of removing the underlying or long-term causes of militancy. Specifically, the government has begun monitoring the curriculum content of religious schools run by the opposition party Partai Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS), namely the *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* (SAR). Dr. Mahathir claims that these schools are the breeding grounds of anti-government sentiment and religious militancy. Of late, the government has cut funding to these schools forcing many to close down or be taken over by the government. The Malaysian Prime Minister appears determined to change the face of religious education in the country, expressing his preference for the system in Johor, which over the past 86 years, has produced children with a strong religious foundation and a willingness to embrace change and modernity — a combination that Mahathir believes is absolutely essential for the country to remain moderate and progressive.

Another desirable feature of the Johor religious education system is the dress code which is distinctively Malay, and in which there is no place for robes or skull-caps or the Middle Eastern influences prevalent in religious schools in other parts of the country.[9] Additionally, it can be argued that the introduction of English as the medium of instruction for teaching mathematics and science subjects in primary and secondary schools beginning in 2003 is yet another strategy aimed at secularising education further, while obliging Malay/Muslim students especially to pursue knowledge that can better ensure their future economic competitiveness. Indeed, an independent Malaysian think tank, the Malaysian Strategic and Research Centre (MSRC) went even further to suggest that "privately run religious schools are a breeding ground for future Muslim terrorists, and should be revamped and placed under strict government control". MSRC director, Abdul Razak Baginda claimed that the PAS-aligned *Sekolah Agama Rakyat* "have become centres for extremism, anti-development and intolerance towards other religions".[10]

Addressing Collectively the Transnational Challenge of Radical Islam

Radical Islam's transnational nature invariably requires the formulation of regional strategies with a clear multilateral dimension. ASEAN is moving quite steadily in this direction post-September 11. However, the efficacy of this multilateral approach is necessarily diluted by the rather strict adherence of member-states to the principle of national sovereignty. A few years ago, Thai Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan attempted to circumvent this problem by proposing a formula for "flexible engagement", but encountered resistance from the rest. The objective was to build and strengthen ASEAN's capacity to tackle internal problems in member countries that pose a threat to regional security.[11] Only Bangkok and Manila were on board while the other eight members including the two Muslim-majority states — Malaysia and Indonesia — preferred to adhere strictly to the non-interference principle thus scuttling the prospect of a radically new approach to ASEAN regional cooperation. Arguably, dealing effectively with transnational terrorism manifesting itself through the local and regional manifestations of Al Qaeda requires heightened vigilance at the domestic or internal level of security management. Malaysia, in particular, in response to global Islamic revivalism since the 1970s, has adopted over the last decade a rather lax immigration policy towards the Muslim world. This official approach to identify more closely with Islam and the Muslim world created space that was quickly seized upon by Islamic fundamentalist and radical groups who were able to enter and leave

the country by escaping official scrutiny. Eventually, they were able to consolidate their activities to a point which enabled them to establish local cells with transnational agendas. In the process, as terrorism expert Rohan Gunaratna categorically states:

> Since the early 1990s JI's regional *shura* (operational base) in Malaysia dispatched at least 100 JI recruits from the region to train in the use of firearms and explosives in Al Qaeda's Afghan training camps at Khalden, Derunta, Khost, Siddiq and Jihad Wal.... The 13 people arrested in Singapore all reported to a regional *shura* in Kuala Lumpur. The units under the regional *shura* also mirror the worldwide Al Qaeda units in both structure and *modus operandi*.[12]

The revelation that Malaysia was part of the Al Qaeda network undoubtedly discomfited Kuala Lumpur. However, the evidence unearthed on JI operatives and Al Qaeda-type cells in Malaysia has undoubtedly emboldened the Malaysian government to strengthen the Internal Security Act to cover a wider scope of threats. Indeed, the UMNO-led Barisan Nasional government capitalised on the fear of Islamic terrorism by assuring all Malaysians and the international community that "the Malaysian state would remain on its secular, moderate and capitalist course. UMNO leaders were careful to insist, time and again, that theirs was a brand of modern, progressive, liberal and tolerant Islam that would not allow itself to be hijacked by militant and extremist elements".[13] The significance of the Malaysian and Singapore arrests of JI suspects lies in the profile of the detainees themselves. And, according to Gunaratna, "The common denominator among those arrested is neither poverty nor lack of education but a shared religious ideology that depicts the United States as the enemy of Islam and a belief that Allah will reward them for waging a global *jihad*."[14]

An additional problem of combating Al Qaeda-linked JI terrorism in Southeast Asia is the fact that its "compartmentalised, loose-knit network means that breaking up individual cells may only have a limited effect on the operation of other groups or the network as a whole". According to BBC reporter Gordon Corera, "The only way to disrupt Al-Qaeda is either by infiltrating its core — almost impossible since at the centre is a highly committed, ideological group — or by destroying the entire leadership."[15] Corera also makes the point that counter-terrorism strategies are compounded by the existence of "a vast pool of potential supporters, unhappy with the economic and social dysfunction of their nations, alienated by globalisation and modernisation, and humiliated by American power".[16]

Malaysia and the Diplomacy of Anti-Terror Cooperation

In the post-September 11 era, far more serious attention is now being given to the origins, nature, dynamics, causes and effects of international terrorism in Southeast Asian intellectual and policy circles. At a recent meeting of regional strategic analysts and scholars on Asia-Pacific security, substantial attention was devoted to the concept of international terrorism symbolised by the WTC bombings in the United States. The 16th Asia-Pacific Roundtable, an international security conference that met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia between 2–5 June 2002, and which was attended by over 250 security analysts, devoted nearly 50 percent of its deliberations to the strategic implications of September 11 and the terrorist threat to the Asia-Pacific region. International terrorism also seized the agenda of the 9th APEC Summit (Shanghai, October 20–21, 2001) and the 7th ASEAN Summit held in Brunei from 4–5 November 2001. The 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, a body normally dedicated to trade, endorsed its first major political statement in its 12-year history by declaring that terrorist acts were a profound threat to the peace, prosperity and security of all people, of all faiths, and of all nations.[17] Two weeks later, the 10 ASEAN leaders issued a "Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism". ASEAN countries, especially Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines, have identified more closely with the US global anti-terror campaign. The United States sent 650 troops including Special Forces to Manila to provide anti-terrorism training to Philippine forces, and of late, there are official reports that this campaign is yielding results, with Abu Sayyaf guerrillas being killed, captured, or having surrendered. Reports later indicated that US-Philippine security forces had killed group leader Abu Sadaya, while the remaining 240 bandits were pursued in Basilan and Jolo islands.[18]

Three ASEAN members—Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia—underscored their determination to fight terror in the region by signing an Anti-Terrorism Pact on 7 May 2002 in Putra Jaya, Malaysia's new Federal Administrative Capital (replacing Kuala Lumpur since June 1999, although Kuala Lumpur remains the capital of Malaysia). The above measures could be interpreted as state-level responses to threats of a transnational character linked to militants wanting to set up a single Islamic state comprising these three nations. The tripartite pact is aimed at (a) targeting potential terrorist threats, and (b) devising measures to tackle money-laundering, smuggling, drug-trafficking, hijacking, illegal trafficking of women and children, and piracy.[19] Significantly, the three ASEAN states are demonstrating their serious commitment to ensuring that terrorists would not make the region

their operational base in view of the fact that they have been flushed out of Afghanistan.

The generally pro-Western ASEAN states have been asked to state their positions unambiguously: either they are with the US or against the US in the global war on terror. Malaysia, as a key advocate of ASEAN regionalism, took this opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties with the Bush Administration. Malaysia-US relations have improved following Prime Minister Mahathir's visit to the US and his summit-level talks with President Bush on 15–17 May 2002. Dr. Mahathir, himself an exponent of realpolitik, used the visit to stimulate US economic, political and military engagement in Southeast Asia in the full knowledge that only America has the wherewithal to launch and sustain a multi-pronged offensive against international terrorists out to destroy national and regional stability. The United States, for its part, was very impressed with "the extent to which Malaysia is a cooperating partner in the global war on terrorism", said Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld prior to Dr. Mahathir's visit to his country.[20] The recent warming of Malaysian-American ties is undoubtedly linked to the impact of September 11 on the leaders of both countries.

However, it must be noted that certain domestic compulsions also lay at the root of Mahathir's desire to align himself with the United States. While his detractors have argued that Mahathir was using the global anti-terror campaign to silence political foes at home, especially PAS, and to divert attention from the detention of populist leader Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister claims that certain Malaysian Muslims had obtained training in firearms and weaponry from Afghanistan, and if unchecked, would pursue their cause of establishing an Islamic state by overthrowing the present elected government, if necessary, by force and violence. In the light of perceived threats to domestic stability, the Malaysian leader was even prepared to strengthen security cooperation with a superpower he has often criticised for being overbearing in its foreign policy. Accordingly, on 14 May 2002, a US-Malaysia Anti-Terrorism Pact was concluded in Washington DC. The primary areas of cooperation include defence, banking, intelligence, border control, transportation, and law enforcement.[21] Malaysia is seen by the United States as a "friendly Muslim nation" in view of the fact that Dr. Mahathir fully supports the anti-terror campaign. He even proposed a definition of terrorism at the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting in Kuala Lumpur (April 2002) — a concept which won American approval but was rejected by the 57-member OIC members themselves.[22] Mahathir suggested that anyone using violence

against civilians, regardless of whether the perpetrator is an individual or a state, is a terrorist.

Malaysia, along with other ASEAN members, has coordinated counter-terrorism measures with other international partners to contain the perceived threat from Al Qaeda. The reality of this threat was manifested by simultaneous announcements in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore of arrests of pro-Al Qaeda militants who had plans to bomb prominent targets in Singapore, including the embassies of the leading members of the anti-terror coalition — Australia, Britain and the United States. Specifically, the Singapore government stated that high value commercial and strategic assets of the United States in Singapore were being targeted by a terrorist group.[23] The arrests of Islamic militants in Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Malaysia are continuing despite the lack of consensus on an acceptable and operable definition of terrorism. In the event, ASEAN members concur that the absence of unanimity on definitions need not hold back the urgent need to collaborate on an ASEAN-wide basis to stamp out this menace to regional security.[24] Thus, cooperation has been ongoing to pursue and defeat the JI in Singapore, the KMM in Malaysia and the Abu Sayyaf in southern Philippines.

It is also noteworthy in the context of the post-September 11 regional security scenario that governmental capacity and legitimacy have not been seriously undermined in the ASEAN countries, i.e., terrorism has not been able to topple the existing governments in Southeast Asia or to significantly alter the political, economic and territorial status quo. This point is particularly pertinent in our assessment of the United States as the world's only superpower since the end of the Cold War. As one specialist on Middle East politics aptly observes with reference to the ideological conflict between Islam and the West symbolised by September 11, "The power of the US as a military, economic and political power will not be destroyed or seriously weakened in this conflict."[25] Thus, besides regional ASEAN-led initiatives and efforts to stamp out the menace of international terrorism, their success also depends significantly on coalition building with the world's superpower. This would necessarily entail the kind of support currently being given to the United States such as the establishment in Malaysia of the Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter-Terrorism. This centre could well serve as the nucleus for fostering closer regional cooperation in the following areas as identified by the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Terrorism held in Kuala Lumpur between 20–21 May 2002: intelligence, extradition, law enforcement, airport security, bomb detection, formation of national anti-terrorism units, and curbing arms smugglers and drug cartels. Yet, the strong assertion of the principle

of non-interference in each other's internal affairs in a transformed era could well be the stumbling block for effective anti-terror cooperation. To be effectively addressed, the post-September 11 agenda of problems obviously require ASEAN to adopt a more pro-active role — a role quite different from the basis upon which the regional grouping has proceeded using the "ASEAN way".[26] The challenge therefore for ASEAN in the post-September 11 era lies in its ability to engage in non-traditional cooperation to address non-traditional threats to regional security.

Malaysia and Southeast Asian Security in the New Millennium

Any objective evaluation of the progress, success or failure to date of ASEAN's anti-terror strategies must be premised on the consideration that terrorism alone does not inform the entire agenda, perspective and priorities of regional security approaches adopted by members of the regional grouping. In addition to the increased threat of global terrorism, Southeast Asia faces many other security challenges as well, many of which are unrelated to the September 11 episode. These challenges are the offshoot of expanding globalisation and economic integration. Globalisation has sharpened the cultural dimension of international relations in the sense that it has compelled state actors to decide on the correct mix of values needed to uphold the integrity of their own societies in terms of certain values pertaining to governance, democracy, and human rights. Are authoritarian or democratic regimes better equipped to deal with the challenges of globalisation — challenges in terms of managing more open political and economic systems, competition, less cronyism, more transparency and accountability, and less ethnically oriented political models? Is political legitimacy sourced in democratic governance rather than in economic growth alone, or is this an irrelevant issue in globalisation? Does September 11 reflect in any sense, an ongoing "clash of civilisations" as claimed by Professor Samuel Huntington in his assessment of the post-Cold War world? Whatever might be the answer, it is obvious that the end of the Cold War has left in its wake an ideological power vacuum which the superpower, the United States, has been obliged to fill through its doctrines of globalisation and, now, after September 11, counter-terrorism. To be sure, Southeast Asian security approaches, strategies, policies and responses are invariably intertwined with the pressures emanating from unipolarity.

Second, other non-traditional security threats would also occupy the minds and energies of regional statesmen — such as piracy, illegal migration, drugs,

religious militancy, environmental pollution, etc. — accentuated as these are by globalisation, and reflect problems beyond the problem-solving capacity of any single state. As noted by Andrew Tan and Kenneth Boutin, "globalisation has resulted in new security threats to communities and individuals that are transnational in character and are increasingly defined in social and economic terms".[27] Indeed, globalisation, on the negative side, increases human vulnerability and insecurity although on the positive side, it enables countries, particularly smaller and developing countries, to achieve economic progress beyond the limits imposed by domestic resources and markets.[28]

Third, the global coalition against terror — in which the leading role is played by the United States and its Anglo-Saxon partners: Canada, Britain, and Australia — would have difficulty sustaining itself over time as new international events, conflicts, and crises erupt in international relations. Just as the United States no longer talks about the 10-year period known as the Post-Cold War era, new developments can, and are likely to supersede the global war on terror. It is already evident that when it comes to logistics and specifics, many Coalition partners such as Germany and other European Union members are foot-dragging. Just as European priorities would differ from America's, so too would regional priorities in Southeast Asia as the war on terrorism becomes protracted. Indeed, the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies observes, "The US faces an enormous challenge in keeping allies and newfound friends focused on a war that may appear to conform to a purely American agenda . . . The transatlantic differences in threat perceptions prevalent before September 11 began to return in early 2002, as some European capitals appeared to relax counter-terrorism postures while the US remained on high alert."[29] Furthermore, Paul Kennedy, the well-known Yale Professor of History notes with respect to the American-led campaign against terror that while punishing raids against terrorist bases and brutal regimes might be understandable, "imperial policing by the American democracy is something else, politically divisive, and ultimately debilitating, and thus runs 'counter to a reasoned strategy for the maintenance of American power in the 21st century' ".[30] The ongoing US-North Korean confrontation over nuclear disarmament, as well as the US-led war against Iraq have almost certainly complicated the global war against terror, particularly in terms of support given by Muslim and Muslim-majority states.

Fourth, regional security in the new millennium — and indeed the global war on terror — will be affected by the issue of leadership transition. Political transition in Southeast Asia is ongoing, with personality-driven systems being progressively replaced by institutional mechanisms for the transfer of

power, especially in the non-Communist states such as the Philippines (since the 1990s) and more recently, Indonesia. In Malaysia, the process of leadership change began following the announcement by Dr. Mahathir on 25 June 2002 that he intended to resign in October 2003, and hand over power to his deputy, Abdullah Badawi. Mahathir's departure from the political scene after 22 years in power would be a test case regarding the extent to which power has been institutionalised to enable a smooth political transition to a younger generation of leaders. Additionally, it raises the opportunity to test the sustainability of the Malay-dominant power sharing formula for the 45-year multi-ethnic Malaysian Federation. Any major political failure in this regard could trigger a less than optimistic scenario with potential consequences for national and regional stability: power struggle, economic decline, exit of foreign investments, inter-ethnic strife, centrifugalism, and religious militancy.

Fifth, international terrorists would look to penetrate "failed states" in Asia — like Afghanistan and Pakistan in Central Asia, and Indonesia and the Philippines in Southeast Asia, and more recently, the newly independent East Timor which achieved independence on 20 May 2002. States with "receptive" Islamic populations such as Malaysia would also provide targets of penetration by religious militants unable to satisfy their aspirations and needs within the existing nation-state system which they consider un-Islamic, and therefore evil and corrupt.

Sixth, the regional security scenario at the beginning of the New Millennium will still be characterised by American strategic preponderance. The US will still be a dominant force in shaping the future security architecture of Southeast Asia and Pacific Asia more by default than by design — as other regional and global actors are relatively weak *vis-à-vis* the United States. The rise of China, in balance of power terms, will most certainly be matched by countervailing power from the US, Russia, Japan and India. In any event, Southeast Asia and ASEAN would attempt to benefit from the economic spinoffs of a rising China through bilateral and multilateral economic arrangements. The Chiang Mai Initiative of May 2000 represents one such bold effort to enact measures that could avert another Asian financial crisis by linking the foreign exchange reserves of the thirteen countries (ASEAN +3, i.e., China, Japan and South Korea), which amount to almost US$1 trillion.[31] The Asian Financial Crisis of 1997–1998 proved how economic collapse can trigger political instability and chaos, and expand the conditions that enable local and international terrorists to thrive and advance their agendas.

Finally, ASEAN as a regional institution, and the ARF as a broader security process would continue to face major constraints in their ability to respond

swiftly to acts of terrorism in Southeast Asia due to at least four factors that characterise the regional security environment: (1) porous borders and generally weak immigration controls, with administrative requirements being surmounted through corruption; (2) long-standing economic and trade links between Southeast Asia and Middle Eastern and South Asian countries, many of which operate outside normal financial channels not readily monitored by governments, and which in turn have facilitated funds transfers from the Middle East and South Asia to radical groups in the region; (3) widespread criminal activity including drug trafficking in the region which in turn can facilitate the movement of resources by terrorists; and (4) the availability of large supplies of indigenously produced and imported weapons in Southeast Asia.[32]

All these factors will tend to dilute the effectiveness of multilateral security cooperation against terror so that regional security institutions such as the ARF will probably continue to function at a modest level of effectiveness. Hence, more effective bilateral and multilateral security arrangements underwritten by the United States, including anti-terror coalitions, will continue to define, energise, and underpin the security architecture of Southeast Asia well into the new millennium. Malaysia's anti-terror strategies and policies will reflect this strategic reality at the regional level.

Notes

1. The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US resulted in the loss of 3,047 lives, with 2,823 alone who perished in the WTC twin towers — mostly American, but also a smaller number of other nationalities.
2. See "ASEAN Way of Fighting Terrorism", issued by the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta, 2002. Available at <www.aseansec.org/12776.htm>, accessed 23 April 2003.
3. For details, see Dilip Hiro, *War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), especially Appendix II, pp. 481–485.
4. *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 3 April 2002.
5. *The Straits Times*, 3 April 2002.
6. *The Straits Times*, 21 January 2003.
7. *The Straits Times*, 30 July 2002.
8. David Martin Jones and Mike Lawrence Smith, "Southeast Asia and the War Against Terrorism: The Rise of Islamism and the Challenge to the Surveillance State", in Uwe Johannen, Alan Smith and James Gomez, eds., *September 11 and Political Freedom: Asian Perspectives* (Singapore: Select Publishing, 2003), p. 162.

9. See article by Brendan Pereira, "Mahathir to Push for Johor Model of Religious School", *The Straits Times*, 11 February 2003.
10. *The Straits Times*, 14 and 17 January 2003. There are more than 500 SARs or privately run religious schools nationwide with 126,000 students. The government has already begun relocating over 70,000 students from such schools to national schools. Students had until 6 February 2003 to move out of SARs.
11. Jason F. Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein, eds., *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities* (London: Transaction Publishers, 2002), p. 228.
12. Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (London: C. Hurst & Co. Publishers Ltd., 2002), p. 193.
13. Farish A. Noor, "Globalisation, Resistance, and the Discursive Politics of Terror, Post-September 11", in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna, eds., *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), p. 171.
14. Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda*.
15. Gordon Corera, "Inside the Terror Network", in Jenny Baxter and Malcolm Downing, eds., *The Day that Shook the World: Understanding September 11th* (London: BBC News, 2001), p. 82.
16. Baxter and Downing, *The Day that Shook the World*.
17. "APEC Unites Against Terrorism", BBC News, Sunday, 21 October 2001. Available at <www.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/asiapacific/ mewsid_1611000/ 1611674>.
18. *The Straits Times*, 26 June 2002.
19. *The Straits Times*, 8 May 2002.
20. *The New Straits Times* (Malaysia), 4 May 2002.
21. *The Straits Times*, 14 May 2002.
22. *The Straits Times*, 3 April 2002.
23. Statement by Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Tony Tan, in connection with the December 2001 arrests of 15 people under the Internal Security Act. *The Straits Times*, 7 January 2002.
24. See "ASEAN Building United Front Against Terror", *The Straits Times*, 21 May 2002.
25. Fred Halliday, *Two Hours the Shook the World: September 11, 2001: Causes and Consequences* (London: Saqi Books, 2002), p. 215.
26. For a comprehensive discussion of the non-interference principle and "flexible engagement", see Amitav Acharya, *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the Problem of Regional Order* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 151–157.
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V. *The US Factor*

Chapter 12

An Enemy of Their Making? US Security Discourse on the September 11 Terror Problematique

See Seng Tan

For many in the United States and elsewhere, 11 September 2001 marked the advent of a new thorny phase in world politics, which US Secretary of State Colin Powell christened the "post-post-Cold War" world. According to one analyst, September 11 "ended a unique era of American optimism as the exposure of American vulnerability revealed a new and bleaker world".[1] Or, as President Bush put it, "We are a different country than we were on September the 10th — sadder and less innocent; stronger and more united; and in the face of ongoing threats, determined and courageous".[2]

Against this backdrop, this essay contends that US security discourse on international terrorism (particularly the Bush Administration's), in conjunction with other ancillary security-oriented discourses, is "productive" or "constitutive" in two interconnected senses. First, they participate in the ideological construction of a particular variant of Islam (and its ostensible adherents) as a dangerous "Other": as "terrorists", "enemies of America", and so on. In this respect, America's knowledge and experience of radical Islamic terrorists as dangerous Others has a great deal to do with the socio-linguistic fabrication of an existential enemy, that is, discursive practices which imbue specific perpetrators of past or potential violence with particular meanings.

Second, through this process of Otherness-making, these discourses, at the same instance, also constitute and maintain, albeit always and only tenuously

so,[3] the political identity of the United States. Discourses of danger and fear are therefore central to discourses of the sovereign nation-state — in this case discourses of and about the supposedly self-evident political community of "America" and its citizens. How do governmental discourses on radical Islam-inspired terrorism make it possible at all for US policymakers and security intellectuals to define "America" and what it represents? How do discourses of danger make it at all possible for human collectivities to regard themselves as national political communities? The America of today, this study argues, does not exist apart from the very differences which allegedly threaten its identity, just as the America(s) of the 1950s–1980s did not exist apart from Cold War-related discourses of danger.[4]

Two Qualifications

Two preliminary clarifications are in order. On the one hand, there is no intention on my part here to assume, much less assert, that the horrific acts perpetrated by the Al Qaeda organisation on September 11 — whose members, at least most of them, are self-professed Islamic *jihadists* — did not happen, as a prominent French poststructuralist scholar apparently claimed *vis-à-vis* the 1991 Gulf War.[5] Televised around the world via instant news feeds, September 11 provided damning evidence to the contrary. As one analyst remarked, "On no single day in the entire history of the United States have more people died in an attack on American soil".[6] Pundits have also compared September 11 with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.

To be sure, September 11 was not the first terrorist attack inspired by radical Islam to take place in the United States. In February 1993, a bomb exploded at the New York World Trade Centre. Indeed, prior to September 11, George Tenet, the CIA director, testified before the US Congress in February 2001:

> Usama bin Ladin and his global network of lieutenants and associates remain the most immediate and serious threat. Since 1998, Bin Ladin has declared all US citizens legitimate targets of attack. As shown by the bombing of our Embassies in Africa in 1998 and his Millennium plots last year, he is capable of planning multiple attacks with little or no warning. His organisation is continuing to place emphasis on developing surrogates to carry out attacks in an effort to avoid detection, blame, and retaliation. As a result it is often difficult to attribute terrorist incidents to his group, Al Qa'ida.[7]

For many Americans, the existential threat of terrorism may well prove more compelling than, say, the potential threat of ballistic missile attacks against the United States by so-called rogue states belonging to the "axis of

evil," which hitherto provided the principal rationale behind the Bush Administration's push to develop and deploy a national missile defence system. As one commentator observed in 1996, "National security issues are not on people's screens at all. When you do finally scratch around for a threat, people see terrorism, not ballistic missiles as the problem."[8]

Nor is my intention, on the other hand, to ignore US involvement in aiding the rise of the Islamic mujahidin, which fought the Soviets in Afghanistan beginning in 1979 and throughout the 1980s, and indirectly out from which emerged the Al Qaeda and other *jihadist* organisations. In this respect, some have suggested that by training and arming the mujahidin — including a young Muslim firebrand named Osama (or Usama) bin Laden — to fight a proxy war on behalf of America against the Soviet Union, the US government created for itself an enemy out of an erstwhile ally. In short, US foreign policy partly gave rise to the Taliban, and perhaps even Al Qaeda itself. Indeed, it is this vexing fact which renders current US discourse on terrorism almost tragicomic.

However, there is another sense in which the US has "made", and continues to make, the "enemy" with which it now contends: through ideologically constructing the former as a dangerous Other that, if left unattended, would prove inimical to America. But there is more. These ideological constructions serve a dual function in that they partly aid to constitute and instantiate the American identity through delineating what America must fear and confront.

Conventional Debates Surrounding September 11

The notion that Islamic extremism is partly an enemy in the making is not particularly staggering if one were to take into account contemporary debates of and about September 11. Various lively debates characterised the post-Cold War era: Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations";[9] Francis Fukuyama's "end of history";[10] growing US unilateralism in a unipolar world,[11] etc. If anything, September 11 has clearly injected new impetus and interest in these debates. Three arguments are particularly noteworthy: September 11 (1) confirms that the West and Islam are indeed enmeshed in a civilisation conflict; (2) is an intra-civilisation, not inter-civilisation, conflict involving the Muslim world; and, (3) is a war waged by the disenfranchised and disaffected against US unilateralism and hubris.

First, in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist incidents, pundits were quick to define the post-September 11 world in terms of a civilisation conflict

(or, as an analyst put it, civilisation enmity.[12]) Though the US and its anti-terror coalition partners in Afghanistan evidently sought to avoid defining their war on terror as such — notwithstanding President Bush's use of the term "crusade" to describe the war on terror during its initial phase — it became patently clear that many Muslims perceived the war against the Taliban and continue to perceive the broader campaign against terrorism as a war between Islam and the West.[13] Writing in *Newsweek* magazine, Huntington similarly argued that "reactions to September 11 and the American response were strictly along civilisation lines".[14]

In his reflections on September 11, Fukuyama (much as Huntington did) stuck to his argument that the world has effectively witnessed the end of history and would continue its gradual but inexorable march towards capitalism and liberal democracy.[15] What seems to be civilisation conflict for Huntington is, in Fukuyama's view, merely the "realignment of the provinces" — coercive cooptation of the remaining holdouts, if you will — to the master ideology and practice of capitalism and democracy. Fukuyama certainly cannot be accused of cultural essentialism, if by this we mean a substantive treatment of culture or civilisation as (in the positivist sense) an independent explanatory variable much as Huntington had tried to do. Nevertheless, he seems prepared to see Islam as a cultural distinctive:

> But there does seem to be something about Islam, or at least the fundamentalist versions of Islam that have been dominant in recent years, that makes Muslim societies particularly resistant to modernity. Of all contemporary cultural systems, the Islamic world has the fewest democracies (Turkey alone qualifies), and contains no countries that have made the transition to developed nation status in the manner of South Korea or Singapore.[16]

Going further than Fukuyama (or, for that matter, Huntington), the controversial Nobel laureate, V. S. Naipaul, interviewed recently in *The New York Times*, dismissed the very concept of non-fundamentalist Islam as "a contradiction". According to Naipaul, "the idea of a moderate [Islamic] state is something cooked up by politicians looking to get a few loans here and there".[17]

Second, the support given by many Islamic governments in Asia to the US-led Coalition suggested that the conflict was within the transnational Muslim community (or, if you will, "civilisation") rather than, a la Huntington, between civilisations. As President Bush's report on "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (NSS), released on 17 September 2002, put it, it is a clash "inside a civilisation, a battle for the future of the

Muslim world".[18] Furthermore, some analysts argued that states acted more as states than as civilisations.[19] As Amitav Acharya has noted:

> From Hindu India to Muslim Indonesia, from Buddhist Thailand to Catholic Philippines, the response of governments was the same. Asked to choose between the US and the terrorists, they overwhelmingly sided with Washington. They did so despite reservations about the US support for Israel, concerns about civilian casualties in the Afghanistan war, and misgivings about US military and economic dominance of the world. And they chose this course despite the Bush Administration's decision to give short shrift to multilateralism and coalition-building.[20]

Finally, the negative perception of US unilateralism and hubris held by many in the Muslim world clearly has a lot to do with how they react to what they see is the latest manifestation of imperialism by the Christian West, particularly the United States and its Western allies. "We are not against America or Americans," Mohammad Sohail Shaheen, the second-highest ranking diplomat who represented the Taliban government in Pakistan, reportedly said, "We are against the arrogance of intimidation . . . I like America. I like Americans. I just don't like American foreign policy."[21]

Many outside America seem to share a similar distaste. Writing for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (1 August 2002 issue), Ahmed Rashid noted that in Pakistan "there is growing anger that US support is allowing [Musharraf's] military regime to delay the promise of democracy".[22] Samuel Huntington said it best when he noted in the most sober establishment journal, *Foreign Affairs*, in 1999, "While the US regularly denounces various countries as 'rogue states,' in the eyes of many countries it is becoming the rogue superpower . . . the single greatest external threat to their societies."[23]

At least a couple of points can be gleaned from the above discussion. First, the proclivity to socially construct Otherness is not dissociable from the articulation of identity, whether defined in terms of civilisation, culture or state. In making a case for US counter-terror discourse as productive of US identity, I am not implying therefore that only America — or the Bush Administration, to be specific — engages in such behaviour. Second, it is apparent US counter-terror discourse does not exist independent of these other discourses. Indeed, one can say that the idea of Islamic extremism as a dangerous Other, as an ideological caricature, partly draws its "materiality" or self-evidentiality from just such debates. In other words, it is precisely these discursive linkages which render the event of September 11 (or, for that matter, 12 October 2002 in Bali, Indonesia) intelligible to specific audiences as an illicit act of gratuitous

terror rather than, say, a statement of courage and moral rectitude, as some quarters within the Islamic world no doubt believe.

Fear, Foreign Policy and Otherness

> The world of objects and of needs would thus be a world of *general hysteria*.[24]
> A notion of what "we" are is intrinsic to an understanding of what "we" fear.[25]

While explaining the Bush Administration's national missile defence (NMD) plan in June 2001, Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld averred to reporters, "I don't think vulnerability is a [viable] policy."[26] Few would doubt the sincerity of the secretary's statement. The administration's perception of America's strategic vulnerability to potential ballistic missile attack by rogue states as well as accidental or unauthorised launches from China or Russia obviously figured prominently in its decision to develop and deploy NMD, which it has evidently started doing in Alaska. Nevertheless, as important as debates over whether or not a missile threat against the US actually exists, what is equally if not more fundamental (as I have argued elsewhere) is how NMD and TMD (the theatre version of missile defence) discourses figure in the incessant writing of "America" — a particular and quite problematic identity that owes its materiality to textual inscriptions of difference and Otherness.[27]

The same can and should be said with regards to US security discourse on terror. As in the case of NMD, the discourse on terror, much as it emphasises the need to establish and preserve the nation's security, is however predicated upon what one analyst, in another context, has called a culture of siege, insecurity, and vulnerability.[28] Though vulnerability may not be, as Rumsfeld put it, a viable policy for the US, the paradox is that it is almost impossible to conceive of the sort of "America" of which the Bush Administration speaks outside of that culture of danger. In other words, the promise of security from such dangers — a promise whose realisation is always deferred — is ironically made possible by the constant reference to danger and insecurity. In Zygmunt Bauman's words:

> The promise has not been fulfilled, but it was precisely its unfulfilment that kept it alive and effective . . . Paradoxically, the key to keeping the promise alive is to invent more fears (provided these are nice, little, manageable fears — ghosts that appear only together with foolproof recipes for exorcism), to make life busier, more difficult, until the whole life-space is filled with worries.[29]

The relationship between danger and the state is therefore that between difference and identity. Security can thus be viewed in terms of the spatial

exclusion of Others and of Otherness; as Ken Booth has put it, "What makes us believe we are the same and them different — is inseparable from security."[30] As difference renders possible identity through delineating what that identity is not or what it must fear, so is it that discourses of danger render possible discourses of the state through delineating what that state is not or what it therefore must fear and confront. Moreover, what "we" fear can also be found within the territorial boundaries that presumably demarcate the sovereign yet contested space of the state. As such, the state is better understood as "a social totality that is never really present, that always contains traces of the outside within, and that is never more than an effect of the practices by which . . . dangers are inscribed".[31]

Conceivably, "America" is under threat, but not necessarily from dangers "outside" as much as from contradictions that reside "inside" an ostensibly settled American identity. Mainstream commentators of American culture and society are not unaware of such conflicting tensions. As historian Arthur Schlesinger noted nearly a decade ago, "The historic idea of a unifying American identity is now in peril in many arenas — in our politics, our voluntary organisations, our churches, our language . . . "[32]

The above insights become clearer when we take into consideration conventional thinking in international relations and foreign policy analysis. Received wisdom assumes that there exists, prior to any notion of a foreign policy, a given self-evident nation-state (or decision-maker). In short, the state, in ontological terms, comes before the policy. Foreign policy as such refers therefore to the external orientation for a pre-established state, whereas foreign policy analysis refers to the study of the policies of given states oriented toward a given external environment or a self-evident outside world.

In view of questions raised by various "reflectivist" writings,[33] the assumption of state identity as pre-established and grounded in an unproblematic logic of explanation has increasingly become untenable, however. Although poststructuralist-minded reflectivists[34] allow that a pre-discursive material world "out there" exists that is independent of language (or discourse), their contention is that it is difficult to know that, beyond the mere fact of its assertion, simply because our knowledge of the world is almost always unthinkable outside of discourse and our received traditions of interpretation. Without seeking to do away with the notion of a pre-discursive materiality — as linguistic monists insist on doing — it bears noting that any assertion, by way of language, of a material reality outside of language is precisely that; a "performative" act which serves as the constitutive condition of materiality.

What the notion of the "performative" implies for foreign policy is astounding. The notion of "foreign", from this vantage point, can no longer be conceived as a neutral category because of its intimate association with discourses of danger and Otherness. As Michael Shapiro has observed:

> The making of the Other as something foreign is thus not an innocent exercise in differentiation. It is clearly linked to how the self is understood. A self construed with a security-related identity leads to the construction of Otherness on the axis of threats or lack of threats to that security, while a self identified as one engaged in "crisis management"... will create modes of Otherness on a ruly versus unruly axis.[35]

Shapiro's observation highlights the plausibility that foreign policy constitutes a particular kind of "boundary-producing political performance"[36] in that what makes the "foreign" in discourse are also the sorts of political performances that make the "domestic" at the same time. Neither domestic or foreign, nor inside or outside, are privileged as ontologically prior.[37] From this standpoint, foreign policy is something neither subsequent nor prior to the state or, for that matter, the international system of states, but is nonetheless central to their constitution. Hence, as a foreign policy practice, discourses on the threat of international terrorism, interwoven with other discourses that provide the former their conditions of possibility, serve to domesticate the contested identity of "America".

Conceivably, current US foreign and security policy is meant to protect and preserve this particular America and its way of life — both of which, as is argued here, cannot be understood apart from the very policy discourses themselves. This raises significant questions for not just the "why" but the "how" of such ideological constructions of difference, danger, and Otherness, and what these might mean for the concomitant formation of identity. For analytical purposes, the differentiation in discourse of identity and difference, of Self and Other, is no innocent exercise but a practice of statecraft fundamental to the constitution of the state in discourse. Differentiation occurs on multiple dimensions or (as Shapiro has it) "axes": the "security" axis, with the key element here being threats; or, the "ethical" axis, the element here being responsibility or right behaviour, and so on.[38]

Of Terrorists, Tyrants and the Writing of "America"

Echoing President Bush's speech at West Point on 1 June 2002, the National Security Strategy (NSS) document, released a year after September 11, sets

the stage:

> Today, the United States enjoys a position of unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence. In keeping with our heritage and principles, we do not use our strength to press for unilateral advantage. We seek instead to create a balance of power that favours human freedom: conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty. In a world that is safe, people will be able to make their own lives better. We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.[39]

From this statement several things seem clear, at least on a cursory level: the US, though preponderant, will forsake "unilateral advantage" and construct "a balance of power that favours freedom". Three major tasks are delineated: the US will fight "terrorists and tyrants"; it will seek to forge cooperation among the major powers; it will encourage free and open societies in every continent. Already one finds an inherent paradox in this preamble, for the inclusion of preemption in the US policy toolkit necessarily presupposes the maintenance of power preponderance or hegemony.[40] In this light, the so-called "balance of power that favours human freedom" is retranslated several pages later without equivocation, "our [US] forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States".[41]

Significantly, the NSS unproblematically equates terrorists with tyrants as sources of danger. In regard to how the figuration of "tyrant" is drawn in US security discourse, President Bush's first major speech on NMD (delivered 1 May 2001) is noteworthy. Emphasising the "vastly different world" of today in perceived opposition to the alleged certainty of yesterday's Cold War era, the president describes the contemporary international milieu as "still a dangerous world, a less certain, a less predictable one", and the existence and ongoing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as well as ballistic missile technology:

> Most troubling of all, the list of these countries includes some of the world's least-responsible states. Unlike the Cold War, today's most urgent threat stems not from the thousands of ballistic missiles in the Soviet hands, but from a small number of missiles in the hands of these states, states for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life. They seek weapons of mass destruction to intimidate their neighbours, and to keep the United States and other responsible nations from helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world.

Without sounding overly deterministic, it would seem that the recent "pre-emptive" war prosecuted by the US and its allies against Iraq was a foregone conclusion in the light of the discursive constructions evident in this 2001 speech:

> Like Saddam Hussein, some of today's tyrants are gripped by an implacable hatred of the United States of America. They hate our friends, they hate our values, they hate democracy and freedom and individual liberty. Many care little for the lives of their own people. In such a world, Cold War deterrence is not enough . . . To maintain peace, to protect our own citizens and our own allies and friends, we must seek security based on more than the grim premise that we can destroy those who seek to destroy us. This is an important opportunity for the world to re-think the unthinkable, and to find new ways to keep the peace.[42]

Several presuppositions are made here: the "world" in which we live is seriously flawed — a "dangerous", uncertain and unpredictable world in which WMD abound. It is a world comprised of states. Specific predicates (say, on a responsible/irresponsible axis) are uncritically attached to certain identities: there is apparently a blacklist of "the world's least responsible states . . . for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life" — unnamed, of course, but linked as that notion is to the discourse on rogue states, "we" already know exactly who "they" are. These "bad" nations use WMD "to intimidate their neighbours, and to keep the United States and other responsible nations from helping allies and friends in strategic parts of the world".

Furthermore, these "tyrants," such as Saddam Hussein, share "an implacable hatred" for the US and its citizens. The verb "hate" is liberally used here: "they" hate "our" friends, hate "our" values, hate democracy, freedom and individual liberty, and so on. These tyrants "care little for the lives of their own people", and they "seek to destroy us".[43] In diametric opposition sits the self-identity of America as a "responsible" nation that is everything those irresponsible regimes are not. Instead, America is friend to one-and-all, it espouses universally accepted values such as democracy, freedom and individual liberty, and it cares deeply for its own people. It is this America that is being threatened by states and peoples who hold an "implacable hatred" against everything that the former is and for which it stands, and who will do everything in their power to "destroy" the US.

Paul Wolfowitz, the US deputy secretary of defence and one of the key architects of the war on terror, has distinguished democracies from tyrants

who rule by fiat and force:

> Here there seems to be a persistent difference between democracies, which look constantly for pragmatic solutions to resolve concrete problems in isolation, and those more ruthless and avaricious leaders who see every such effort as a sign of weakness and whose real goal is to change power relationships in a fundamental way.[44]

Wolfowitz offers no explanation for why he differentiates between two distinct levels-of-analysis in international relations: the state/regime-as-actor level (democracies) and the individual-as-actor level (tyrants who run rogue states). Following Shapiro's observation, the creation of Otherness here can be seen to occur along several axes. First, where rationality/irrationality is concerned, the individual-as-actor is effaced when Wolfowitz considers democracies. This leaves a regime-type (democracy) that is purportedly predisposed to technical problem-solving and incessantly in search of "pragmatic solutions to resolve problems". No politics — and with it irrationality and uncertainty — need apply in a society in which history and ideology have supposedly ended,[45] where "concrete problems" are solved "in isolation". Against this rational, democratic institutional subjectivity stands a lesser, rather loathsome subjectivity: a coterie of so-called "ruthless and avaricious leaders" who rule over non-democracies and who regard rational cum technical problem-solving as "a sign of weakness".[46]

Second, Otherness is also discursively constituted in moral/immoral (or responsible/irresponsible) terms. Here, tyrants and "axis of evil" leaders are "ruthless and avaricious" — an intentional, not accidental, choice of predicates. Against these inscriptions of immorality/irresponsibility, stand moral/responsible "America". The unequal adoption by Wolfowitz's discourse, in the case of "democracies", of the analytical level of state/regime connotes that all America, and not only its leaders or certain individuals, is thereby kind, compassionate, altruistic. To be sure, nowhere in his words does Wolfowitz imply that there are as such no immoral or irresponsible Americans. Nor does he even hint that all citizens of rogue states are therefore roguish. But the discursive effect is such that we are left with the impression that tyrants epitomise the darkest of the dark metaphysics of human nature.

The transition from "tyrants" to "terrorists" appears seamless in US security discourse. A great deal has been said but a couple of examples should suffice, such as, "Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what we see right here in this chamber [i.e., Congress] — a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms — our

freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."[47]

Or this, "Our nation faces a threat to our freedoms, and the stakes could not be higher. We are the target of enemies who boast they want to kill — kill all Americans, kill all Jews, and kill all Christians. We've seen that type of hatred before — and the only possible response is to confront it, and to defeat it."[48] And if tyrants are bad enough, then terrorists are even worse since, as the NSS put it, "Shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank."[49] As John Lewis Gaddis mused about the US vulnerability to terrorist attack, "How, though, do you contain a shadow? How do you deter someone who's prepared to commit suicide?"[50] Worst of all, this enemy is stateless, among other myriad disconnections which US anti-terror discourse assigns it, fairly or otherwise:

> And on that every night [11 September 1941], President Franklin Roosevelt spoke to the nation. The danger, he warned, has long ceased to be a mere possibility. The danger is here now. Not only from a military enemy, but an enemy of all law, all liberty, all morality, all religion. For us too, in the year 2001, an enemy has emerged that rejects every limit of law, morality, and religion. The terrorists have no true home in any country, or culture, or faith. They dwell in dark corners of earth.[51]

At first glance, the ideological fusion — deliberate, not accidental — of terrorists with tyrants may seem odd. After all, "axis of evil" dictators are, as one analyst noted, "more into survival than suicide"; their "lifestyles tend more toward palaces than caves".[52] But lest this lawless, repressive, immoral, irreligious, cave-dwelling Other seems too remote and difficult to apprehend, then fusion makes good sense. On an ideological level, the discursive writing of the nation is usually, as Bhabha has allowed, an "ambivalent" act replete with slippages and overlaps[53] which, in everyday discourse, are easily overlooked so much so that the presupposition of unity and wholeness is without debate. On a more practical level, a nation at war has little patience for nuance. Hence, "We have seen their kind before. They are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the 20th century. By sacrificing human life to serve their radical visions — by abandoning ever value except the will to power — they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism."[54]

Importantly, as noted earlier, the Bush Administration has taken care to avoid defining the war on terror as a war on Islam. "The face of terror is not the truth faith of Islam", President Bush told the Islamic Centre of Washington, DC on 17 September 2001. "Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent

peace. They represent evil and war."[55] Contrary to the at times unwarranted opinions of partisan academics, the Bush Administration, in distinguishing Islam from terrorism, is actually in agreement with the emerging academic consensus. However, if the policy here is to allay and assuage Muslim concerns, then that policy clearly is not well served by the at times unintended effects of academic sophistication, as reflected by the following analyst's comment:

> Islam, by contrast, is the only cultural system that seems regularly to produce people like Osama bin Laden or the Taliban who reject modernity lock, stock and barrel. This raises the question of how representative such people are of the larger Muslim community, and whether this rejection is somehow inherent in Islam. For if the rejectionists are more than a lunatic fringe, then Huntington is right that we are in for a protracted conflict made dangerous by virtue of their technological empowerment.[56]

Whether intended or not, the effect of this statement puts the spotlight back on Islam. Granted, the above analysis is not an official statement of the US government, and as such should not be taken to represent government policy. But the ideological effect it produces is such that the interwoven nature of security discourse with other discourses — strategic studies, geopolitics, communism, authoritarianism, colonialism, and so on — creates a kind of totalizing effect not unlike the pervasive "orientalism" which influenced and guided former imperial European powers in their intellectual, cultural, political, and economic conquest and occupation of their colonies.[57]

Elsewhere, Donald Emmerson has argued:

> Islam is no such thing. On 10 October, the 60 different countries that belong to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), including Indonesia, were unambiguous on this point. Addressing the September slaughter, they declared "that such deplorable terrorist acts run counter to Islam's tolerant heavenly message [of] peace, harmony, tolerance, and respect among people". That message, they said, "values human life and denounces the killing of innocent people". Thus did the OIC flatly reject any attempt, by bin Laden or anyone else, "to claim a link between pure Islam" and "acts of terrorism".[58]

Emmerson, of course, is right. Yet the problem remains whereby many of the OIC governments — most of which are perceived by their own populaces as authoritarian and corrupt — are also viewed as surrogates of the US, who stay in power because of the support they receive from America. As Noam Chomsky has argued, "Today we [Americans] do ourselves few favours by choosing to believe that 'they hate us' and 'hate our freedoms.' On the

contrary, these are attitudes of people who like Americans and admire much about the US, including its freedoms. What they hate is official policies that deny them the freedoms to which they too aspire."[59]

What particular "America" emerges from these discourses of danger and vulnerability? For a nation and people inscribed as rational, responsible, moral, free, law-abiding, and religious, the qualities that supposedly define terrorists and tyrants are precisely those for which America, idealised as the New World — a seemingly virginal, innocent, and righteous identity — has no place. Indeed, just such a pristine identity is often adduced as the universal ideal to which all nations and peoples are presumed to aspire — a point made forcefully in the earlier cited "end of history" thesis popular at the close of the Cold War.[60] In other words, what is good for America is obviously good for the whole world (or, at least those parts that are rational, responsible, moral, etc.). This assumption was evident, say, in US discourse on NMD. "Missile defence", as one US Congressman averred, "is for Americans, for Europeans, for Russians, and for all peace-loving peoples on the face of the Earth."[61]

Likewise, President Bush reinforced this notion of universality on the first anniversary of September 11, "Our country is strong. And our cause is even greater than our country. Ours is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind... That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it."[62] That some of the people who apparently "hate" the US are not necessarily against what America "is" but what it does suggests that the slippage between discursive performance and its appropriated effect is most apparent when this particular identity, which the difference and danger of terrorism engenders, is taken into account. How US discourse on terror works to create such effects — the enemy against which the US purportedly fights; the identity of "America" which that discourse idealises and that cannot be understood apart of the very things that threaten it — is therefore of vital policy relevance. Or at least it should be.

Conclusion

The argument maintained here has been that a particular representation of America does not exist apart from the very differences that allegedly threaten that representation. The argument has not been that the Bush Administration fabricated, *ex nihilo*, a terrorist threat against the US. Nor has it been that discourse is "everything". Rather, through reiterative and coordinated practices by which discourse produces the effects that it names, a certain normative

representation of America "emerges" — wrought, as it were, by fear and written into being by terrorism hysteria. In his critique of President Bush's speech delivered on 8 October 2002, *The Guardian*'s Robert Fisk observed that Bush used the words "terror", "terrorists" and "terrorism" at least thirty times in a speech that lasted half an hour. "That's one 'terrorism' a minute," Fisk noted.[63]

Fisk has a point. The process of Otherness-making — in this case the ongoing practices of representing and constituting terrorism and terrorists — can itself be a form of discursive terrorism as well. Indeed, beyond the discursive, one finds an invidious form of terror, among others, arising in America's war on terror. As one analyst has observed:

> Attesting to the retreat of democracy in the West is the new US doctrine of "homeland security". Though ostensibly geared to defeating the terrorist menace, homeland security is also a highly elastic notion that could be made to cover all aspects of fighting "low-intensity" threats and monitoring day-to-day living. It is a doctrine that supports the concept of "netwar" developed in America. The real heroes in the coming war on terrorism may not be the "Daisy-cutters" and "Predators" of Afghanistan, but the "pervasive sensors" found in America and its fellow-travelling nations, sensors which could be "attached to every appliance in your house, and to every vending machine on every street corner, and which would then register your presence in every restaurant and department store".[64]

Ultimately, it behoves us to heed Robespierre's infamous caveat, "They say that terrorism is the resort of despotic government. Is our government then like despotism? Yes, and the sword that flashes in the hand of the hero of liberty is like that with which the satellites of tyranny are armed . . . The government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny."[65] In the name of protecting and preserving the liberty and lifestyle of a supposedly self-evident "America", ideological representations of tyranny and terror — and the policies formulated and practices implemented in response to those representations — may well prove just as if not more tyrannical and terrorising.

Notes

1. Harvey Sicherman, "Bleak New World", a Foreign Policy Research Institute E-note distributed exclusively via fax and email, 17 August 2001.
2. "President Discusses War on Terrorism". Address to the Nation, World Congress Centre, Atlanta, Georgia. Available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/print/20011108–13.html>.

3. Although the Enlightenment understanding of identity is that of a self-contained and settled subjectivity, "reality" suggests there is almost always slippage between discursive performance and its appropriated effect. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 122.
4. See, for example, David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, revised edition (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
5. Jean Baudrillard, "The Reality Gulf", *The Guardian*, 11 January 1991. Also see the critique of Baudrillard's claim in Christopher Norris, *Uncritical Theory: Postmodernism, Intellectuals, and the Gulf War* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992), chap. 1.
6. Donald K. Emmerson, "Letter From America", *Tempo*, 16–22 October, 2001.
7. George J. Tenet, Director of Central Intelligence, "Worldwide Threat 2001: National Security in a Changing World". US Congressional Hearings on Worldwide Threats, 7 February 2001. Another intelligence assessment put it this way, "The UBL network is analogous to a multinational corporation. Bin Ladin, as CEO, provides guidance, funding, and logistical support, but his henchmen, like regional directors or affiliates, have broad latitude and sometimes pursue their own agendas." Thomas Fingar, Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, Statement for the Record, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Hearing on Current and Projected National Security Threats to the United States, 7 February 2001. Available at <www.usinfo.state.gov/>.
8. Cited in Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), p. 494.
9. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997).
10. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).
11. See various essays in Ethan B. Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
12. Kumar Ramakrishna, in a personal communication with this author.
13. Bruce Hoffman, cited in Kumar Ramakrishna and Andrew Tan, "The New Terrorism: Diagnosis and Prescriptions", in Andrew Tan and Kumar Ramakrishna, eds., *The New Terrorism: Anatomy, Trends and Counter-Strategies* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002), p. 6.
14. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Age of Muslim Wars", *Newsweek*, Special Davos Edition (December 2001–February 2002), p. 13.
15. Francis Fukuyama, "The West Has Won", *The Guardian*, 11 October 2001.
16. Fukuyama, "The West Has Won".
17. Cited in Satu P. Limaye, "Islam Asian-Style", *PacNet*, 1A, 4 January 2002.

18. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", 17 September 2002, p. 34, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/ nss.html>.
19. Amitav Acharya, "Clash of Civilisations? No, of National Interests and Principles", *The International Herald Tribune*, 10 January 2002.
20. Amitav Acharya, "Rethinking International Order After September 11: Some Preliminary Reflections", Unpublished Paper.
21. Available at <www.salon.com/news/feature/2001/10/10/taliban/ index1.html>.
22. Cited in Noam Chomsky, "Drain the Swamp and There Will Be No More Mosquitoes", *The Guardian*, 9 September 2002.
23. Cited in Chomsky, "Drain the Swamp and There Will Be No More Mosquitoes".
24. Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 45, emphasis original.
25. David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), p. 85.
26. "Rumsfeld and Rice Discuss Policy Threats and Challenges", 1 June 2001, available at <usinfo.state.gov/topical/ pol/arms/stories/01060433.html>.
27. See Seng Tan, "What Fear Hath Wrought: Missile Hysteria and the Writing of 'America' ", IDSS Working Paper No. 28 (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, July 2002).
28. Michael Leifer, *Singapore Foreign Policy: Coping With Vulnerability* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 4.
29. Zygmunt Bauman, "The Sweet Scent of Decomposition", in Chris Rojek and Bryan S. Turner, eds., *Forget Baudrillard?* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 29.
30. Ken Booth, "Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist", in Keith Krause and Michael Williams, eds., *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases* (London: UCL Press, 1997), p. 6.
31. Richard K. Ashley, "Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War", in James Der Derian and Michael J. Shapiro, eds., *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics* (New York: Lexington, 1989), p. 304. Judith Butler phrases it this way, "The subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as its own founding repudiation." See, Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, p. 3.
32. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America — Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992), p. 17. The notion that state identity was once unitary but is now in crisis has, of late, garnered some attention in mainstream international relations analysis, with rejoinders ranging the gamut from celebration of difference, cautious approval, appeal to dogma and authoritative figures, to outright despair. See, Yosef Lapid, "The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 33 (1989), pp. 235–254. Many of these responses stem

from an insistent fidelity to either of two things, or a combination of both: on one hand, the positivist premise that social totalities can be authentically represented by the right theory and/or method; on the other, the phenomenological premise that there is always a subject prior to all construction. The specific direction in which this study will proceed begins with a quite different assumption, however: that a discourse of danger is neither a faithful representation of external threats "out there", nor a singular or deliberate "act" that fabricates threats where none exist. Rather, discourse is a reiterative and referential practice by which it — and the subjects who engage in and are constituted by it — produces the effects that it names. And if so, then "America" can be understood as a contested identity that must continually preserve the self-imposed limits (or boundaries) by which it affirms itself — limits that are conscientiously patrolled and enforced, in mutually reinforcing ways, by discursive practices and their practitioners.

33. Robert O. Keohane, "International Institutions: Two Approaches", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 32 (1988), pp. 379–396; R. B. J. Walker, "History and Structure in the Theory of International Relations", *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (1989), pp. 163–183.
34. An excellent introduction is the edited volume by Der Derian and Shapiro, *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics.*
35. Cited in Simon Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other", *Alternatives*, Vol. XIII (1988), pp. 415–442. The quote is on p. 419.
36. Richard K. Ashley, "Foreign Policy as Political Practice", *International Studies Notes*, Vol. XIII (1987), p. 51.
37. No charge of linguistic or interpretive "free play" is warranted here, since I do not assign ontological priority to difference/outside/Other (or danger) in relation to identity/inside/Self (or the state). Moreover, to assert the efficacy of discourses and texts, as I have done, is not the same as advocating, as transcendental solipsists might do, that language and interpretation necessarily occurs "all the way down", or interpretation "that celebrates the infinitised 'freeplay' of a writing cut off from all the irksome constraints of truth, reference or valid demonstrative argument". See, Norris, *Uncritical Theory*, p. 32. Stated in another way, to claim — like structuration theorists — that agency/practice and structure are "mutually constitutive" is appropriate if and only if we accept that — unlike structuration theorists — the agent-structure problematique cannot be resolved precisely because they constitute an *aporia*, i.e., irresolvable alternatives. See, Roxanne Lynn Doty, "*Aporia*: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (September 1997), pp. 365–392.
38. In his seminal study of the constructions of the Other by European explorers which paved the way for the subsequent conquest and domination of the indigenous civilisations of the Americas, Tzvetan Todorov, for example, has suggested the

existence of at least three interconnected axes or levels, "First of all, there is the value judgment (an axiological level): the other is good or bad, I love or do not love him, or as was more likely to be said at the time, he is my equal or my inferior (for there is usually no question that I am good and that I esteem myself). Secondly, there is the action or rapproachment or distancing in relation to the other (a praxeological level): I embrace the other's values, I identify myself with him; or else I identify the other with myself, I impose my own image upon him; between submission to the other and the other's submission, there is also a third term, which is neutrality or indifference. Thirdly, I know or am ignorant of the other's identity (this would be the epistemological level); of course there is no absolute here, but an endless gradation between the lower or higher states of knowledge." For Todorov, what constitutes as reality is a kind of aggregate, interactive effect of multiple levels; by the same token, no single level by itself is sufficient to establish and preserve the metaphysics of presence and identity. See Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

39. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", 17 September 2002, p. 3.
40. This same point is made in John Lewis Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation", *Foreign Policy*, No. 133 (November/December 2002), pp. 50–57.
41. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America," 17 September 2002, p. 33.
42. Bush's NMD speech at the US National Defence University, 1 May 2001. Available at <usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/stories/01050177. html>.
43. It was interesting that these same tropes figured prominently in a televised interview given by Karen Hughes, a senior advisor to President Bush, in her condemnation of the terrorists (presumably Osama bin Laden and his associates) who inflicted such horrific devastation to the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. The same caricatures of danger and Otherness deployed in Bush's NMD statement were evident throughout Hughes' discourse, with the only visible exception being the substitution of the "missile threat" with "terrorism". Interview with Barbara Walters on American Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) television, 19 September 2001.
44. Paul Wolfowitz, "Remembering the Future", *The National Interest*, No. 59 (Spring 2000), pp. 35–45, p. 40.
45. See, Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*; and Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).
46. This blanket inscription of the authoritarian Other as ill-disposed and even hostile toward rational problem solving disregards the writings on the rational technocratic elites of, say, the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes of Latin America, or those of the *dirigiste* economies of East Asia — many of which used to be (or in some cases still are) of the "soft" authoritarian variety. Among innumerable

examples, see, James W. Morley, ed., *Driven by Growth: Political Change in the Asia-Pacific Region*, revised edition (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999).

47. "President Declares 'Freedom at War with Fear' ". Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People, p. 3, available at <www.whitehoue.gov/ news/releases/2001/09/print/20010920-8. html>.
48. Available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/print/ 20011108-13.html>.
49. "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America", 17 September 2002, p. 3.
50. Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation".
51. "President Pays Tribute at Pentagon Memorial", p. 2. available at, <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/10/print/20011011-1.html>.
52. Gaddis, "A Grand Strategy of Transformation".
53. Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation", in Homi K. Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 292.
54. "President Declares 'Freedom at War with Fear' ", p. 3.
55. " 'Islam is Peace,' Says President", p. 1, available at <www.whitehouse. gov/news/releases/2001/09/print/20010917-11.html>.
56. Fukuyama, "The West Has Won".
57. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).
58. Emmerson, "Letter From America".
59. Chomsky, "Drain the Swamp and There Will Be No More Mosquitoes".
60. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.
61. Representative Curt Weldon (Republican-Pennsylvania), founder and co-chairman of the Congressional Missile Defense Caucus, in a speech to the US House of Representatives on supporting the President's missile defense initiative. Available at <usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/ arms/stories/01050302.html>.
62. "President's Remarks to the Nation". Available at <www.whitehouse. gov/news/releases/2002/09/print/20020911-3.html>.
63. Robert Fisk, "What the President Wants Us to Forget", *The Guardian*, 9 October 2002.
64. Acharya, "Rethinking International Order After September 11: Some Preliminary Reflections". The quotes therein are from David Ignatius, "Pervasive Sensors Can Net bin Laden", *International Herald Tribune*, 12 November 2001.
65. Cited in Roger Scruton, *A Dictionary of Political Thought* (London: Pan Books, 1983), pp. 460–461.

Chapter 13

Power, Leadership and Legitimacy in the War on Terror: Meshing "Soft" and "Hard" Power in US Foreign and Security Policies

Evelyn Goh

Introduction

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the US homeland catapulted anti-terrorism to the top of the American security agenda. The Bush Administration has tried assiduously to transpose this new vital national security concern onto existing relationships and issues on the global stage. The war on terror involves hunting down terrorist cells and networks in military, financial and social realms across national boundaries, and is a campaign which necessitates the help of friendly and not-so-friendly states. This requires exercise of leadership from Washington to persuade other states that they share the terrorist threat perception and preoccupation sufficiently to prioritise and pursue policies that are consistent with the ends of US security concerns.

This leadership capacity is in turn derived from US power, which has been substantially affected by the events and aftermath of September 11. On the one hand, September 11 not only failed to alter US preponderance of power in the international system, but in fact reinforced US credibility, power projection and military involvement abroad. On the other hand, the terrorist assaults on

the American homeland demonstrated dramatically that, notwithstanding its unipolar status, the US faces significant unorthodox threats beyond the realm of great power competition. September 11 and the US responses to it have impacted significantly upon the vital "soft" foundations of American power — its values and ideology; its benign image; and the perceived legitimacy of US world leadership. In the longer term, this may constrain and undermine the effectiveness of the exercise of American power.

In view of this, the deployment of conventional "hard" military power to combat the "new" terrorism must necessarily be circumspect because of the phenomenon of "blowback", or the unintended consequences of a state's foreign policy actions. Crucially, Washington must reconsider how best to harness and reinforce its "soft" normative power, for the most critical variable in determining the effective waging of the war on terror may well be the perceived legitimacy of US values and leadership.

"Soft" Power and the Foundations of American Hegemony[1]

State power may be disaggregated into two elements: "hard" military and resource-based power (aggregate power); and "soft" ideational and institutional power. Realists tend to focus on the former, and by their account, US military power has been reified and American primacy reinforced in the wake of September 11. The successful war to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan as part of Bush's war on terror, testified to the continuing credibility, effectiveness and primacy of US strength in traditional interstate affairs.[2] Washington remains able simultaneously to project its power in multiple areas; and anti-terrorism has lent almost unprecedented impetus to domestic support for unilateral action and steep increases in defence spending. The international war on terrorism has also seen new, renewed or intensified US involvement in the key strategic regions of Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.[3]

On the other hand, those who have looked beyond military strength to economic relations and institutions — loosely termed "liberals" — are inclined to emphasize the "soft" aspects of state power.[4] "Soft" power, according to Joseph Nye, derives from "intangible" power resources such as culture, values, ideology and institutions. Such power is exercised by attracting others to subscribe to, and thus legitimise, the order established by the dominant power. This relates to more indirect, or "co-optive" means by which the leading state sets the agenda or structures situations in world politics in order to "get others to want what it wants".[5]

In examining the implications of 9/11 for American power, it is crucial to consider these broader foundations of American power. The US differs from previous imperialist great powers in terms of its relatively limited ambitions in the orthodox aim of controlling overseas territory. Rather, American grand strategy since the Second World War has been characterised as much by military deployments as by the construction of international institutions and norms consistent with the liberal democratic structures of American capitalism.[6]

One set of explanations is based on rational utility calculations. Liberal writers argue that even as the world's sole superpower after the end of the Cold War, US power to shape the international system unilaterally is circumscribed by forces of globalisation and interdependence; while others suggest that in spite of its economic, military and technological primacy, the US cannot do without the cooperation of at least some major powers in dealing with any major global security issue.[7]

Constructivist approaches to international politics suggest a second body of explanations, which stresses the sociological dimensions of how dominant states exercise power. This approach develops Nye's concept of co-optive power and Ikenberry's argument about strategic restraint further, by analysing how other states in the system may be persuaded or socialised into accepting and adopting the values and norms propagated by the dominant power in the international system.[8] While the process of socialisation is determined by a host of constitutive exogenous and domestic factors, the key idea here is that a dominant state such as the US is now, needs to constantly exercise persuasive power to convince others to buy into its normative and institutional structure. Moreover, its persuasive power derives in large part from its perceived knowledge and trustworthiness[9], which are in turn read from its rhetoric and actions.

Working from this insight, this paper posits that there are three elements to US "soft" power: the appeal of American values and culture; the perception that US hegemony is benign; and the apparent legitimacy of the exercise of American power. The following analysis suggests that while the terrorist attacks of September 11 may have reinforced "hard" US power, they have had significant negative impact on its "soft" power.

By dramatically challenging US values and ideology, the terrorist attacks triggered off a questioning of American character and behaviour. At the same time, this process has served to highlight the negative and sometimes malign effects of American projections of power. Furthermore, Washington's reactions to the attacks have fuelled controversy and have sensitised the

international community to questions regarding the legitimacy of American actions and policies. Taken together, these consequences of September 11 work to undermine the critical "soft" aspects of US power.

Values and ideology

For Americans, the September 11 attacks were interpreted as assaults against what the US is and what it stands for. President George W. Bush's initial reaction was to label the attacks "evil, despicable acts" targeted at "our way of life", "because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world".[10]

One immediate means of explaining the events was to characterise them as evil, irrational acts of madmen and fanatics, inspired by religious fundamentalism and envy. This has evolved into attempts to explain the "root causes" of such radicalism. This approach tends to view the US has having been targeted as a powerful symbol of the exploitative and repressive "Other". The central ideological battle is in fact that between the radical and moderate elements within Islam, and the US has been dragged into an intra-Muslim civil war by fundamentalists such as Osama bin Laden, with the aim of furthering the Islamic revolution within the Arab world by overthrowing pro-Western governments.[11]

Yet, the appeal of radical Islam amongst the masses is also fuelled by a developmental crisis in which American values and ideology are implicated. This crisis results from a process of "failed and incomplete modernisation", in which many Muslim societies live under regimes which are associated with or supported by Western powers but fail to provide for their people.[12] Thus, there is resentment amongst politicised Muslim communities against the perceived hypocrisy of the US in preaching democracy and freedom while propping up repressive regimes.

Moreover, international reactions to the US war on terrorism suggest that the US has lost some ground in the international ideological balance of power. Some analysts suggest that at the popular level, there has been a consolidation of "a global coalition of feeling against the US" since September 11, while others detect a "pervasive bloc of resentment" against the ease and force with which the US is able to retaliate against relatively powerless states.[13] Public opinion polls show that America's international image has suffered significantly not only in the Muslim world, but also amongst friendly states.[14] In Washington, there has been increased attention paid to this "serious image problem" recently. A Council on Foreign Relations

Task Force acknowledges widespread and deep-rooted international perceptions of Americans as "arrogant, self-indulgent, hypocritical, inattentive" and "[lacking in] empathy toward the pain, hardship, and tragic plight of peoples throughout the developing world"; and recommends a more rigorous effort at public diplomacy to explain US foreign policy.[15]

Of course, this might reflect the envy of power *per se* that can be expected to dog any major power. The difference in this case is that material envy is combined with resentment which bears a deep-seated ethnic and religious element, and has been exploited by fundamentalists to advance an ideological cause. In the process, even as Bush portrays his war on terror as a crusade to defend the principles of "liberty and justice" shared by the US and the rest of the "civilised" world, American values and ideology are being dragged under international scrutiny, to its detriment.[16]

Benignity

In trying to explain the acts of violence on September 11, "root causes" may be divided into two elements: the socio-political conditions promulgating extremist actions and their supporters; and aspects of the victim's character and behaviour which provide foci for grievance and attack. The intensified scrutiny of US foreign policy in the wake of September 11 has served to highlight the negative effects of American projections of power. This process affects the foundations of US power precisely because the persistence of US hegemony after the Cold War can be explained by the way in which it is perceived to be benign by many other states.

Conceptual approaches to explaining state power that emphasise state identity, threat perception, and the construction of shared interests and institutions, rather than balance of power *per se*,[17] suggest that American power is generally viewed as acceptable because the US is perceived as a non-threatening hegemon exercising strategic restraint and maintaining international institutions whose norms are ascribed to by other states. The US has "made its power safe for the world" by creating and playing by a set of international rules.[18] While other states cannot ultimately prevent unilateral action by the US, American intervention in the world would be much more costly if not supported, or if opposed, by friends and allies. In this sense, exercising "soft" power is a more sustainable option in American foreign policy.[19]

Against this backdrop, the terrorist attacks of September 11, presented to some extent as retaliation for American strategic policy in the Middle East, highlight the fact that some groups perceive US foreign policy actions as

sufficiently malign and malicious to react in a significant way.[20] Such collateral consequences may increase the potential costs of American intervention abroad considerably. Chalmers Johnson has made this point forcefully employing the concept of "blowback", a term coined initially by the CIA to refer to the unintended results of secret American interventions.[21] Johnson and others argue that many apparently unprovoked attacks on American interests and citizens are in fact retaliatory responses by terrorist groups or rogue regimes against prior US actions.[22]

Explicit in the "blowback" thesis is the recognition that terrorist organizations are spurred not only by resentment against US preponderance and values *per se*, but also against what America does. Their cause and their momentum are nurtured and sustained by the accumulation of grievances against the way in which American power and ideology have been brought to bear against selected groups over time. From the 1990s onwards, fundamentalist networks in the Middle East have tapped into popular resentment against the US which coalesce around nodal issues such as American support for Israel, US intervention in the Gulf War, US bases on Saudi territory, US-led sanctions against Iraq, and the US missile attacks on a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan in 1998.[23] In the wake of September 11, the US war on an already devastated Afghanistan to bring about a regime change reinforced the "bully" image. In this sense, American actions act as fuel for radical fires and fodder for recruits to the cause: whether intended or unintended, elements of American foreign policy may be used to promote a sense of victimhood and to encourage a propensity for extremist action in the name of a "just cause".

Washington is certainly aware of this link. A 1997 Defence Department report acknowledged that

> Historical data show a strong correlation between US involvement in international situations and an increase in terrorist attacks against the United States . . . the military asymmetry that denies nation states the ability to engage in overt attacks against the United States drives the use of transnational actors.[24]

It is recognised that "animosity against America is related to serious policy issues".[25] From Washington's point of view, the barometer to watch is the extent to which the international community buys into the substantive grievances of networks like Al Qaeda. If the voices calling for a redress of US policy in Middle East, especially towards Israel/Palestine and bases in Saudi Arabia, grow in number, volume and intensity, they may undermine the normative assumption of benignity that has underlain the successful phase of US

hegemony thus far. For America's friends and allies, this consideration operates especially within the critical political processes of legitimising support for US policy, in both the domestic and international arenas. These processes in turn impact upon the perceived legitimacy of American actions and the United States' status as a global leader.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is the key factor in the process of persuading others to subscribe to the international order established by the dominant power. Broadly understood as the right to exercise the power of leadership or governance, legitimacy is based on consent and a perceived concordance of values and identities in existing norms.[26] We may distil three elements of legitimacy for this analysis. First, a state's action may be considered legitimate if it conforms to accepted international norms and rules. Second, the concept of legitimacy is undergirded by the principles of reciprocity, mutuality and respect. Third, the legitimacy of a state's action is derived in part from the process by which the state constructs the case for the desirability of the means and ends it wishes to pursue.

The legitimacy of American exercise of power after the terrorist attacks of September 11 has been called into question on three fronts: legality, unilateralism, and interventionism.

First, American reactions to the events of September 11 has been judged on perhaps the most obvious measure of legitimacy, their adherence to international law. While there was general acceptance that the Taliban's harbouring of Al Qaeda was *jus ad bellum* for the war in Afghanistan, questions have been raised about the limits and inconsistency of the Bush Administration's professed aim of retaliating against states and regimes that harbour terrorist organizations. If the war in Afghanistan is legally justifiable on these grounds, why is Washington not employing the same strategy or other sanctions against other states which also shelter and nurture these groups, most obviously Pakistan and Saudi Arabia?[27] The implication is that the US is guided by narrow short-term interests in its selective application of the right to employ force against weaker states which are of less strategic value.

In addition, there was significant international criticism about the legality of American treatment of prisoners captured in Afghanistan. As Adam Roberts points out, observance of the rules of war is particularly important in the campaign against terrorism because the perception of compliance with basic international standards will increase public and allied support or acquiescence,

while the failure to comply would provide further justification for terrorist opponents to resort to force. At the same time, adherence to international law adds to the moral distinction between the US and its allies, and the terrorists.[28]

Second, the legitimacy of US global leadership has been questioned on the grounds of a perceived rising unilateralism under the Bush Administration, when there seems to have been "a general depreciation of international rules, treaties, and security partnerships".[29] After September 11, the Bush Administration's attempt to orchestrate an international alliance in its war against terrorism was presented as an ultimatum. Bush's statement that "[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists", has been regarded as Washington cashing in its superpower chips.[30] At the same time, the Pentagon and State Department have emphasised a more selective approach to gathering "revolving coalitions . . . depending on the activity and the circumstances", and asserted that Washington "will act alone when necessary".[31]

The Bush Administration has also demonstrated its unilateral proclivities in a series of other areas, most notably its abrogation of the ABM treaty in order to pursue the Theatre Missile Defence system, its decision not to ratify the Kyoto protocol on climate change, the erection of steel tariffs, and its opposition to the International Criminal Court. International perceptions of Washington's new penchant for unilateralism impinge upon the broader normative legitimacy of US world leadership because it undermines the foundations of the social contract between the benign hegemon and other states in the system, which are premised upon cooperation and the pursuit of commonly held social goods.

The third, and perhaps most cogent way in which the legitimacy of American actions and leadership has been challenged since September 11, is in perceived US hyper-interventionism. This charge crystallised around the Bush Administration's determination to deal forcefully with the problem posed by Saddam Hussein's Iraq after September 11 and the war in Afghanistan.[32] This culminated in a successful US campaign against Iraq in March 2003, backed by British and Australian forces.

The Bush Administration offered two main justifications for war. Iraq had repeatedly flouted its international commitments not to develop nuclear weapons, and to allow UN arms inspectors to detect and destroy weapons materials. Thus, first, on the assumption that Saddam Hussein managed to further develop WMD capabilities in the past ten years that he intended to employ against US interests, Washington asserted its right to take pre-emptive action in order to destroy such capabilities and to oust the hostile

Iraqi regime.[33] Second, the US was waging war against Iraq to enforce international law. As the only power able to provide the enforcement mechanism for these international rules, Washington was applying the ultimate sanction against Iraq for flouting the UN on the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).[34]

Critics have argued that UN sanction for such a campaign would have provided some much needed "unique legitimacy" to the enterprise in terms of multilateralism and international law.[35] Certainly, the Bush Administration's decision to take the Iraq question to the UN Security Council in September 2002 and Resolution 1441 did improve the calculus of legitimacy for Washington's potential campaign. The initial idea was that the US eventually went to war because Iraq flouted the terms of Resolution 1441, it would be doing so on ground made firmer by this display of international support and reaffirmation of UN norms. As events developed, however, the Security Council disagreed on the actual trigger for war, with permanent members France, Russia and China pressing for more extended arms inspection against American and British insistence that Saddam Hussein had failed to meet the demands of Resolution 1441 for full and immediate cooperation towards disarmament. It became clear that the Bush Administration did not regard the UNSC resolution as binding upon US action, as it asserted that Washington's right to launch the war anyway.[36] In this context, other legitimacy concerns *vis-à-vis* US hyper-interventionism have been heightened.

The key critique was that a war on Iraq would not be a just war. The Bush Administration tried to justify its consideration of an attack on Iraq by recourse to America's right to self-defence as enshrined under Article 51 of the UN Charter.[37] But this justification is problematic if applied in a preemptive fashion outside of the defending state's national territory. Furthermore, the preemptive doctrine rests upon the presence of an immediate and direct threat. The Bush Administration provided no contemporary evidence, before or after the war, of Saddam Hussein's purported capabilities and — crucially for meaningful threat evaluation — intentions to deploy WMD against US interests.[38] Moreover, a preemptive offensive presupposed that other options — deterrence, coercion, or negotiation — would fail. Yet, prior to the war, some analysts asserted that Saddam Hussein could be contained: he had been cautious in employing force in the past only against neighbours whom he believed to be weak and isolated; and that he had no incentive to use WMD against the US and its allies, for fear of retaliation.[39]

The other main criticism concerning the legitimacy of the war on Iraq pertains to the principle of sovereign equality. Taken to the extreme, the

contention is that the war was illegal, an unprovoked invasion in violation of national sovereignty as enshrined in Article 2 of the United Nations Charter.[40] This argument was made both by the Russians and members of the British Prime Minister's own Cabinet.[41] More generally, the successful campaign in Iraq based on the Bush Administration's doctrine of preemptive war has probably deepened the neo-conservative conviction that "sovereignty has been made newly conditional: governments that fail to act like respectable, law-abiding states will lose their sovereignty".[42] The implication is that some — weaker and smaller — states could be invaded for the purposes of preventive strikes and/or "regime change" even if they are not technically violating any international laws, as long as Washington deems that they are a threat.

That the Bush Administration did try to garner international support through the UN for a war on Iraq reflected some understanding that the US, even as the world's sheriff, has to avoid excessive unilateralism and interventionism for political and diplomatic reasons. In terms of "soft" power, this concern speaks to the themes of reciprocity, mutuality and respect, which underlie legitimacy. These are most often manifested in action in conjunction with shared interests, and in line with professed shared values and norms. In practice, it entails consultation, working through international institutions, invoking international norms — generally bothering to make a case seriously according to the established rules.

Still, the difficulty with the Bush Administration's drive for war against Iraq lay with the perception that it was merely seeking a multilateral "rubber stamp" for a unilateral policy which would have been carried out in any case.[43] The Iraq campaign was also seen by some as the opportunistic extension by Washington of the counter-terrorism umbrella as an excuse to pursue other strategic goals.[44] When the US is perceived to be instrumentalist, inconsistent, or hypocritical regarding international norms, it undermines American values and their power to structure debates and interactions. Eventually, it begs the question of whether the US itself is becoming a revisionist power within an international system that it was critical in shaping.[45]

As historian Paul Schroeder warns, the norms and values, which we claim to be universal, are in fact changeable. Crucially, the "actions of great powers above all shape norms, mould expectations, provoke reactions, invite imitation and emulation, uphold or destroy or change the prevailing rules".[46] If the post-September 11 era is indeed marked by an ideological battle for hearts and minds, then what the US does with and to international norms, rules, and understandings of what is and is not permissible in international relations, matter now more than ever before.

Constraints on US Power and Implications for American Leadership

The argument so far is that the "new" terrorism and the American response have undermined critical elements of US "soft" power in the international arena, even as its "hard" power has been reinforced. These trends will, in the longer term, constrain the exercise of American power by limiting the choice and effectiveness of foreign and security policies. By extension, Washington's ability to set the international security agenda and to exercise global leadership in counter-terrorism may be undermined.

At the domestic level, the neo-isolationism that one might have expected as a consequence of the September 11 attacks has so far been kept in check by nationalist reactions, and by a discourse playing down the relationship between terrorism and American foreign policy. Yet, cracks are already appearing. Civil liberties groups have called into question the constitutional validity of elements of the Bush Administration's homeland security policies, and Congress lent support to the administration only after vigorously debating the legitimacy of the potential war on Iraq.[47] Prior to the war on Iraq, public opinion, while in favour of a preemptive attack on Saddam Hussein, was significantly conditional upon international support rather than a unilateral US campaign.[48] Even after the victory in Iraq, opinion polls found that the American public remained concerned about the Bush Administration's proclivity towards wars of preemption, with about half of those asked objecting to future interventions without international support.[49]

The anti-terrorism campaign is in itself a difficult enterprise, constituting a long-term battle in shadowy financial and intelligence realms whose results are not easily demonstrable to the public. Adding to that a long-term occupation and commitment to rebuilding Iraq, would only serve to stretch the tolerance of a nation well known for its primary preoccupation with domestic affairs. At the same time, the US government will need to deal with the impact of its anti-terrorism "war" and the Iraq campaign in deepening ethnic and religious divides within American society.

Bush Administration hawks have been proven right in that the invasion of Iraq was be short and effective, like the 1991 Gulf War.[50] Yet, even though the US has toppled Saddam Hussein's regime, a campaign of "regime change" necessarily implicates the US in the long-term rebuilding and democratisation of a complex but strategically central state in the Middle East.[51] While the Pentagon is hoping that US military control of post-war Iraq will last for between six months and one and a half years, sceptics suggest that given the

ethnic and factional infighting amongst political groups both within Iraq and amongst the exiled opposition, Washington is more likely to face a long-term occupation of Iraq similar to its post-World War II experience in Japan.[52] A fierce debate has broken out over the details of governance and reconstruction in post-war Iraq, but it is clear that, for reasons of political legitimacy, the UN must be significantly involved not only in providing humanitarian aid, but also in overseeing the transition to Iraqi self-government and economic reconstruction.[53]

Such a development would fuel extremist Islamic hatred of American power and occupation of sacred territory.[54] While there was no attempted terrorist attack against the US during the war, it is conceivable that there could be a rise in the incidence of such attacks over time. In the domestic realm, Washington will have to factor in the consideration of such "blowback" for homeland security.[55] In the longer term, the constant fear of such consequences can only serve to strengthen neo-isolationist interest groups. One does not need to invoke the Vietnam analogy to recognise that domestic political forces will constrain decision-making in Washington over the longer term. Beyond that, such a commitment might affect domestic economic recovery and would divert resources from the international war on terrorism, which has been portrayed as the Bush Administration's primary foreign policy goal and the basis on which it has harnessed the current international coalition.[56]

At the international level Washington has already experienced greater pulling and hauling as it tries to coordinate its policies with allies and friends. Allies are important to the US for "soft" political and diplomatic reasons, but also for hard military reasons. For the Iraq campaign, Washington required secure bases and access to airspace from Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan and Turkey. It also forged a coalition of selected willing allies like Britain and Australia in the actual war.[57] And, while Washington did at times manage to cobble together a united diplomatic front against Saddam Hussein at the UN, the arms inspection and declaration process threw up further and deeper disagreements and divisions on issues such as the legitimate triggers for war; whether the continued implementation of the arms inspection regime or the immediate enforcement of UN resolutions should be pursued; and whether UN support is necessary for a US attack.

The extension of its war on terrorism has acted as a wedge between Washington and its friends in three ways. First, it called into question the perceived values and interests shared by the US and its allies. America's European allies — with the exception of the British Prime Minister — have been primary dissenters on the issues of legitimacy with regard to US actions. Second,

it further deepened the pre-existing resentments against American power and hegemony in more ambivalent states in the less developed countries, such as those in Latin America. Third, the governments of many states friendly to the US are pre-occupied with the prospect of blowbacks from American actions in their domestic realms. Arab and other states with significant Muslim populations recognise most clearly that a US attack on Iraq would inflame domestic radical elements, and as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak warned, "Not one Arab leader will be able to control the angry outburst of the masses."[58]

As Australia's reactions to the Bali bombing showed, terrorist blowback against even strong and committed US allies will generate ambivalent responses. On the one hand, Canberra's resolve to stand firm alongside Washington in the war against terrorism seems to have been strengthened. On the other hand, there has been significant domestic questioning of the Howard government's close alliance and identification with the US, at the expense of relations with Southeast Asian countries and attention to the terrorist threat in this neighbouring region.[59] The terrorists' other target in the Bali bombing, Indonesia, can expect to face increasing domestic ethnic, economic and socio-political tensions as a result of the blow to the weak Indonesian economy, and the deepening rift between radical and moderate Muslim factions. It is blowback in this vital group of "pivot" states like Indonesia and Pakistan that might suffer Islamic radicalisation, which Washington must be most concerned about.[60]

Thus, in order to secure and sustain the efficacy and legitimacy of its leadership role in global counter-terrorism efforts, the US needs to bring to bear not only its "hard" power, but also to pay attention to shoring up its "soft" power bases. Post-September 11, concerns about the desirability, benignity, and legitimacy of US power and leadership centre on the aims of: maintaining the international alliances which play an important role in US defence strategy; sustaining the existing favourable world order based on American values and leadership; and ensuring domestic trust and confidence in the central government.[61] Assuaging these concerns will depend on whether Washington can persuade its various audiences of the moral and legal justification for its actions.

In order to better mesh the "soft" and "hard" aspects of American power and thus reinforce Washington's persuasiveness, the critical issues for the US are: sustained and consistent recourse to international norms, genuine consultation and cooperation with other states, and the cultivation of a rather more nuanced understanding and construction of the terrorist threat in different parts of the world.

The issue of international norms has already been discussed at length in the section on legitimacy. What about "consultation" and the question of the type of relationship that Washington should seek with friendly states and allies in jointly waging the war on terror? There is a growing recognition in Washington policy circles of the importance of "public diplomacy" in executing US foreign policy. But the policy discourse so far appears to suggest that merely a more thoughtful and aggressive "selling" of US policy motivations is all that is required. In contrast, working from an understanding of the "soft" foundations of US power, it is clear that the relationship of "consultation and cooperation" which Washington needs to develop with other states in this prolonged campaign must consist of at least the following key elements:

- A firm but subtle presentation of US national interests and motivations, with particular attention to possible coincidence of interests with other states;
- The recognition of other states' national interests and sensitivities, as well as the political limitations faced by other key governments because of their regional or domestic circumstances;
- A conscious acknowledgment of the broad-based nature of bilateral and regional relationships beyond terrorism, and continuing pursuit of other shared agendas in the political and economic/developmental realms;
- The willingness to re-assess and to alter bilateral or regional policies which may be inconsistent with or detrimental to greater strategic goals;
- Sincere attempts to consult with allies and crucial friendly states, and to achieve meaningful bilateral and multilateral cooperation; and
- The careful targeting of counter-terrorism assistance or cooperation to suit specific needs and situations of particular countries and regions.

Ultimately, this means working towards a greater understanding of the complexity of the threats posed by the "new" terrorism. In order to target more effectively its leadership efforts in the military, political and financial realms of the war on terror, Washington must grapple with the question, "whose war on terror?". The American war is itself a complicated one, targeted not only against international terrorist networks but also selected states that harbour these organisations. Moreover, Washington and London have tried assiduously to establish linkage between the threats of terrorism and unconventional weapons of mass destruction, in the process broadening the scope of the war.

Just as the US war on terror encompasses other pressing national security interests and objectives that are not always consistent, the war on terror as

defined by other regions and states assimilate their particular complexities and contradictions. In the Middle East, as discussed above, the counter-terrorism campaign must struggle with deep-seated problems of governance and developmental failure, as well as ideological conflicts and fundamentalism. The danger here is that the US has not been able to juggle successfully the multiple interests and requirements at stake. While concentrating on the hunt for Al Qaeda, and on the search for allies in the wars on Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington appears to have ignored the "root cause" issues which analysts have identified. Critically, the Bush Administration has done very little to mediate elements of US foreign policy practice which are implicated in the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. These include, of course, the settlement of the Israel/Palestine conflict,[62] and the glib mantra of support for "democracy" and "freedom", which imply that issues of distributive justice and accountability should guide decisions about which regimes to support.

In Europe, the war on terror is focused on transnational criminal, intelligence and financial networks, areas in which there has been significant progress. On the other hand, European states face a host of domestic political circumstances and worldviews which necessarily limit their potential support for the US expansion of the war into Iraq. Questions of legitimacy and legality feature prominently in vocal liberal media and public opinion, and along with massive public anti-war sentiment, countries like France, Germany, and the UK must also contend with the disaffections of their own, largely immigrant Muslim populations facing socio-cultural issues of assimilation.[63]

The Southeast Asian war on terror is discussed in greater detail by other essays in this volume, but suffice to say that issues of national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regime security are key determinants here. Transnational terrorist networks have tapped into pre-existing groups and causes in this region, many of which are related to aspirations of separatism or autonomy, or other intra-national ethnic and religious conflicts.[64] Thus, even if funding and organisational support is received from networks like Al Qaeda, the motivations on the ground remain domestic political issues. For this reason, governments in the region are particularly sensitive to the ways in which the US war on terror superimposed on the region, might impact on regime security and domestic stability. We need only mention three examples. First, Indonesia has come under extreme pressure to crack down on suspected terrorists, but the government and public opinion are unwilling to return to the draconian detention system under the previous military regimes.[65] Second, allegations in late 2002 of links between the ruling coalition in Malaysia and the prime regional terrorist network caused outrage because of the way in

which it undermined UMNO's own attempts to portray Islamic opposition parties as fundamentalist. Finally, Australian Prime Minister John Howard's support of Bush's preemptive strike doctrine was received angrily by Southeast Asian leaders because it was seen as a further example of neo-imperialism by Western powers.[66]

This means, for the US, that it must devote greater energies to consultation with local governments and more careful understanding of the terrorist threat in each area. An excessive focus on excavating links between well-known transnational terrorist networks and discrete events might obscure the fact that certain high-profile attacks in other parts of the world might have more to do with local conflicts than the apparent fundamentalist Islamic *jihad* against the US.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis has examined the implications of September 11 for US power and leadership. It has argued that the terrorist attacks and Washington's response have had significant impacts upon the "soft" elements of American power. In the attempt to understand why such an attack happened, American values and ideology — centred on the concepts of democracy and capitalism, and flanked by more nebulous values of "freedom", "justice" and "development" — have come under scrutiny. As the search for "root causes" of the "new" terrorism proceeded, the character and exercise of US power have also been analysed and found wanting by many in terms of benignity and legitimacy. Taking these criticisms seriously is important, as the perceptions and evaluations of friends and allies about the nature of US power will critically affect the sustainability of the foundations of this power, and the legitimacy of its global leadership. At the same time, over the longer run, the effectiveness of the exercise of American power will be affected by negative assessments of and "blowback" from its actions in response to terrorism. Increased friction with its international allies and friends, and rising concern with the costs of more overseas intervention and the possibility of further terrorist attacks at home will serve to constrain Washington's policy choices.

These reconsiderations about the foundations and exercise of US power are particularly salient in the light of the "Bush Doctrine", which reflects how September 11 has facilitated a more assertive and interventionist, but also more idealistic, American security strategy. It is based on a more explicit combination of "soft" and "hard" power in its determination to promote "a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values

and our national interests". These values are defined as "liberty and justice . . . principles [that] are right and true for all people everywhere", and the "non-negotiable demands for human dignity". At the same time, the Bush Administration asserts its right to carry out "pre-emptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national security", and seeks new bases and access arrangements for further deployment of American forces overseas. Moreover, Washington retains faith in its sheer preponderance of power, and pledges that its forces will be "strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States".[67] This strategy of strengthening primacy, intervening more assertively to protect security and interests, and adopting a more explicit ideological basis for foreign policy, can be expected to exacerbate extant problems.

If Washington is to boost the legitimacy, sustainability, and effectiveness of its power and leadership in the war on terror in particular, but also in international affairs more generally, then it urgently requires a more considered approach to meshing "soft" and "hard" power. The US must recognise that September 11 happened in part because of what America stands for, but also as a reaction to what American does around the world. The way in which US power is exercised is a critical key to beheading the terrorism hydra. Thus, greater consultation and cooperation with other states, more conscientious adherence to international norms, and more nuanced constructions of the terrorist threat, are vital to this enterprise.

Notes

1. I have made the argument set out in this section elsewhere; see Evelyn Goh, "Hegemonic Constraints: The Implications of September 11 for American Power", *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (April 2003), pp. 77–97.
2. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, "American Primacy in Perspective", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July/August 2002), p. 21; Michael Cox, "American Power Before and After 11 September: Dizzy with Success?", *International Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 2 (2002), pp. 261–276.
3. For some contemporary analyses, see Charles Fairbanks, "Being There" and Andrew Bacevich, "Steppes to Empire", in "Bases of Debate: America in Central Asia", *The National Interest* (Summer 2002), pp. 39–53; John Gershman, "Is Southeast Asia the Second Front?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (July/August 2002), pp. 60–74; Aaron Friedberg, "11 September and the Future of Sino-American Relations", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 40–42.

4. For instance, compare neo-realist Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979) with Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion: A Study of the Relation of Military Power to National Advantage* (London: Heinemann, 1912) and neo-liberal institutionalists Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1989).
5. Joseph S. Nye, "The Changing Nature of World Power", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (1990), p. 181. See also Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990).
6. On this point, see particularly G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
7. Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Samuel Huntington, "The Lonely Superpower", *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1999), pp. 35–49.
8. See G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialisation and Hegemonic Power", *International Organisation*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (Summer 1990), pp. 283–315; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Treating International Institutions as Social Environments", *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 45 (2001), pp. 487–515.
9. Arthur Lupia and Mathew D. McCubbins, *The Democratic Dilemma: Can Citizens Learn What They Need to Know?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
10. "Bush's Remarks to the Nation on the Terrorist Attacks", *The New York Times*, 12 September 2001; "After the Attacks: The President", *The New York Times*, 13 September 2001.
11. Francis Fukuyama, "History and September 11", in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds., *Worlds in Collision: Terror and the Future of Global Order* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 32; Michael Scott Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War: Ideology, Rage, and the Assault on America", in James F. Hoge and Gideon Rose, eds., *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001).
12. Fareed Zakaria, "The Return of History: What September 11 Hath Wrought", in Hoge and Rose, *How Did This Happen?*, p. 316.
13. Fred Halliday, "A New Global Configuration", in Booth and Dunne, *Worlds in Collision*, p. 236, 241. Booth and Dunne argue eloquently in *Worlds in Collision* (pp. 2–3) that "it is the lack of power that besets Islam". The fear and envy of power operates between Islamic communities and the US because America's structural power "tends to provoke the hostility of those who are not listened to, or who do not get their way, ever", whether in the domestic or international context.
14. "A Rising Anti-American Tide", "A Global Image on the Way Down", *International Herald Tribune*, 5 December 2002.
15. Peter G. Peterson, "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism", *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2002), pp. 75–76.

16. George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address", 29 January 2002, Washington, DC, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>.
17. For example, Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organisation*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 391–425; Ikenberry, *After Victory*.
18. G. John Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition", *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2002), p. 49.
19. See Richard N. Haass (Director of Policy Planning, Department of State), "Defining US Foreign Policy in a Post-Post-Cold-War World", Arthur Ross Lecture, Foreign Policy Association, New York, 22 April 2002.
20. This is not to suggest that the US foreign policy record was previously unblemished. American interventions in the Vietnam, Nicaragua and Panama — to name but a few — were also controversial.
21. Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 2000); Chalmers Johnson, "Blowback", *The Nation*, 15 September 2001.
22. Johnson, *Blowback*, pp. 9–13. See also Ivan Eland, "Does US Intervention Overseas Breed Terrorism?", Cato Institute Foreign Policy Briefing No. 50, 17 December 1998, in which Eland lists 64 terrorist attacks against US targets between 1915 and 1998, which he suggests resulted from interventionist American actions overseas.
23. See, for instance, Robert Fisk, "Osama bin Laden: The Godfather of Terror?", *The Independent*, 15 September 2001.
24. Defence Science Board task force report on responses to transnational threats to Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, 1997, quoted in Eland, "Does US Intervention Overseas Breed Terrorism?", p. 2.
25. Petersen, "Public Diplomacy and the War on Terrorism", p. 78.
26. See Jean-Marc Coicaud, *Legitimacy and Politics: A Contribution to the Study of Political Right and Political Responsibility* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Thomas Francks, *The Power of Legitimacy Among Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).
27. A Rand Corporation analyst's report to the Pentagon pointed out this inconsistency with regard to Saudi Arabia, asserting that the Saudis are active at "every level of the terror chain". See "Briefing Depicted Saudis as Enemies; Ultimatum Urged To Pentagon Board", *The Washington Post*, 6 August 2002. A group of relatives of victims of the attacks on September 11 have also filed civil suits against the house of Saud for financing Al Qaeda.
28. Adam Roberts, "Counter-terrorism, Armed Force and the Laws of War", *Survival*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 20–26.
29. Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition", p. 53.

30. George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People", Washington DC, 20 September 2001. Available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/20010920-8.htm>.
31. Donald Rumsfeld, Department of Defence News Briefing, 25 September 2001, available at <www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2001/ t09252001_t0925sd.html>; Haas, "Defining US Foreign Policy in a Post-Post-Cold War World", pp. 4–5.
32. On the case for war, see Kenneth Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (New York: Random House, 2002). Good critiques of the war on Iraq include Karl Kaysen *et al.*, *War with Iraq: Costs, Consequences and Alternatives* (Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2002).
33. "Cheney Says Saddam is Actively Seeking Nuclear Weapons"; "Bush, Blair Decry Hussein", *The Washington Post*, 8 September 2002; *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (September 2002), available at <www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html>.
34. See Bill Emmott, "Saddam and His Sort", *The Economist*, 27 June 2002; James A. Baker, III, "The Right Way to Change a Regime", *The New York Times*, 25 August 2002; George W. Bush's address to the United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 2002, available at <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/09/20020912-1.html>.
35. Kofi Annan's address to the United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 2002, available at <www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/SGSM8378.doc.htm>.
36. "France, Germany and Russia Vow to Stop Use of Force against Iraq", *The New York Times*, 5 March 2003; "Bush Sends Message to UN Ahead of Report", *The Financial Times*, 7 March 2003.
37. "Interview with Colin Powell", *The New York Times*, 7 September 2002; Baker, "The Right Way to Change a Regime".
38. The White House instead issued a long catalogue of Iraq's non-compliance with UN resolutions since 1991, see "A Decade of Deception and Defiance", available at <www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/iraq/decade/book.html>. A British report released in September 2002 suggested that Saddam Hussein was probably several years away from building a nuclear bomb, and was making slow progress in rebuilding his arsenal of missiles. See IISS Strategic Dossier, "Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Net Assessment" (London: IISS, September 2002). At the time of writing, no WMD had yet been found in post-war Iraq — see "The Mystery of Saddam's Banned Arms", *The International Herald Tribune*, 7 April 2003; "US Has Not Inspected Iraqi Nuclear Facility", *The Washington Post*, 25 April 2003.
39. John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "Can Saddam Be Contained? History Says Yes", 12 November 2002, Occasional Paper, International Security Programme, Belfer Centre for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University.

40. See, for example, "Church Leaders Speak Against 'Wicked' War", *The Times*, 5 September 2002; "War Would Be Illegal", open letter from academic lawyers to 10 Downing Street, *The Guardian*, 7 March 2003. See Evelyn Goh, "Legality and Legitimacy of the War Against Iraq", paper presented at Seminar on "Legal, Moral and Military Aspects of the War in Iraq", Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 9 April 2003.
41. "Clare Short Ready to Resign over Iraq War", *The Times*, 10 March 2003; "Urgent Diplomacy Fails to Gain US 9 Votes in the UN", *The New York Times*, 10 March 2003.
42. Ikenberry, "America's Imperial Ambition", p. 53.
43. Robert Kagan, "Multilateralism, American Style", *The Washington Post*, 14 September 2002.
44. Anton Lieven, "The Push for War", 3 October 2002, *London Review of Books*; "Controlling Iraq's Oil: Not So Easy", *The New York Times*, 3 November 2002.
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Chapter 14

US Strategy in Southeast Asia: Counter-Terrorist or Counter-Terrorism?

Kumar Ramakrishna

Between 20 March and 9 April 2003, US-UK Coalition forces mounted a stunningly successful military campaign against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. The euphoria generated by the sheer scale of the military victory and the political "liberation" of a people that had been brutalised by Saddam and his henchmen for over two decades, appeared at first to obscure the fact that the invasion had been preceded by a very acrimonious debate in the United Nations Security Council that polarised that body and seriously harmed transatlantic relations.[1] The debate centred principally on whether Iraq had possessed Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) that would have enabled it to destabilise the geo-politically crucial Middle East or even supply Al Qaeda with the means to mount a WMD attack against America and its interests. In fact, as the months wore on, the continuing inability of occupying US/UK troops to discover evidence of WMD in Iraq generated concerns, both within the US and internationally, that the Pentagon may have overemphasised the Iraqi WMD threat in order to justify the invasion.[2] In addition, the emergence of guerrilla warfare and terrorism by Baathist and radical Islamist elements against US/UK and even UN targets led some to believe that Iraq might be developing into a new arena for global *jihad* involving radical Islamist terrorists from elsewhere, as perhaps Afghanistan had been in the 1980s.[3] Others feared Iraq might become the "new Vietnam".[4]

More worryingly, a poll by the Washington-based Pew Research Centre for the People and the Press of 16,000 people in April and May 2003 showed that the Iraq war had "sparked a sharp rise in Muslim hostility toward the US".[5] In addition, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, widely regarded as a powerful voice for moderate Islam worldwide, lamented that the US invasion, in the face of UN opposition, had not only weakened international law and increased the insecurity of weak states in general and in the Muslim world especially, a clash of civilisations between the West and Islam was already in progress. He charged that Washington's behaviour had generated a "who's next" discourse amongst Muslims everywhere.[6] In this respect, many were "dumbfounded at the threats against Syria and Iran made by influential members of the Bush Administration".[7]

The Iraq campaign represented the first formal application of the new US doctrine of pre-emption as set out in the US National Security Strategy (NSS) that was released in September 2002. Subsequently, in February 2003, the Bush Administration released the National Strategy for Countering Terrorism (NSCT), that sought to elaborate on Section III of the NSS that had stipulated the need to destroy terrorist organisations, win the war of ideas and strengthen US security at home and overseas. This essay argues that the chief problem with both documents is that they over-emphasise military and law enforcement elements over the ideological factors that animate radical Islamist terrorism. That is, US strategy tends to emphasise mainly short-term counter-*terrorist* elements at the expense of more fundamental longer-term counter-*terrorism* measures.[8] It is argued that in Southeast Asia, the focus of this essay, a far more balanced approach will be needed to neutralise radical Islamist terrorism, manifested most importantly by Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the network behind the October 2002 Bali bombings, and more recently, the August 2003 suicide bombing of the J. W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. As we shall see, while a counter-terrorist approach might be useful in neutralising JI's "functional space", an augmented counter-terrorism thrust is needed to close down the network's all-important, ideologically-driven, "political space".

The United States National Security Strategy: Rationale and Thrust

The NSS is in essence a response to the post-Cold War strategic reality of asymmetric warfare. In the past, only states with "great armies and great industrial capacities" truly possessed the capacity to threaten America. However, the

terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 demonstrated that "shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to [America's] shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank".[9] It is a fact that globalisation — the "multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between the states and societies which make up the modern world system"[10] — has radically transformed the strategic equation. Thanks to the rapid proliferation and decreasing cost of communications technology such as satellite telephones and the Internet, terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda are now better able to control and co-ordinate their operational activities by forming widely dispersed networks of operationally self-reliant and elusive cells that are nevertheless knit together by a shared ideology and doctrine.[11] Furthermore, through accessing the abundant information available on the World Wide Web, terrorists can plan effective operations involving "kidnapping, bomb making and assassination".[12] Complementing the enhanced capacity of terrorists to wreak havoc is the enhanced vulnerability of modern societies. Thomas Homer-Dixon has observed that "modern societies are filled with supercharged devices packed with energy, combustibles, and poisons, giving terrorists ample opportunities to destructive ends".[13]

Quite apart from the enhanced striking power of globalised terrorism, the *religious-messianic content* of the likes of Al Qaeda also sharply increases the threat posed to America and its allies. As Steven Simon and Daniel Benjamin argue, religion today appears to have become a key driver of terrorism.[14] Of particular importance is the fact that the religious-messianic motivation of the "new terrorists" appears to encourage the perpetration of mass casualties and indiscriminating terror.[15] Simon and Benjamin show that Al Qaeda justifies its targeting of American civilians by claiming that US weapons and support result in the deaths of scores of Muslim civilians, and the American population is directly culpable for the actions of the US government.[16]

The strategic dilemma facing Washington is that the Cold War strategies of containment and deterrence may not work against the likes of Al Qaeda. These strategies worked in the past because they assumed "the existence of identifiable regimes led by identifiable leaders operating by identifiable means from identifiable territories".[17] But as John Lewis Gaddis observes, "How though, do you contain a shadow? How do you deter someone who's prepared to commit suicide?"[18] This is why the Bush Administration has decided to opt for a policy of pre-emption, pointing out that in international law states are legally authorised to "take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack".[19] The whole point is to ensure that America's terrorist enemies and/or their state sponsors are never permitted

to strike first, as the next September 11 might involve the use of WMD.[20] President Bush and Vice-President Cheney have been very concerned about biological strikes on the United States.[21]

Apart from strategic-operational considerations, one must add the domestic political dimension as well. Bush Administration officials fully recognise that the political costs of another September 11-style attack would be far too high. Hence Bush has made the anti-terror war the primary focus of his presidency,[22] while his national security team has been preoccupied with demonstrating tangible progress in the War on Terror.[23] This is also why, following the defeat of the Taliban and the elusive nature of Al Qaeda, Iraq became transfixed in the crosshairs of the Bush Administration.[24] The Americans focused on Saddam Hussein's regime because, *inter alia*, in contrast to the nebulous Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda, Iraq could be identified and targeted. In targeting Baghdad, moreover, Washington sought to enhance America's security by projecting an uncompromising image of a superpower that would not hesitate to use military force to utterly destroy not just terrorist organisations but also states with dubious histories and associations with terrorist organisations. As leading US military analyst Ralph Peters puts it, the key is to "be feared".[25]

In fact, a closer analysis of the NSS reveals that it is not merely about preempting terrorist organisations and rogue states before they attack the US. It is more broadly about "the stability of the Middle East, about oil, but also the role of the United Nations and the position of the United States in the 21st century".[26] Analysts assert that ultimately, the NSS reveals the intent of the Bush Administration to employ the full might of America, especially its military power, to proactively spread democracy everywhere. As Gaddis argues, the Bush Administration reckons that sweeping democratic reform, especially in the perennially problematic yet crucial Middle East, will eliminate the resentments that drive relatively well-educated young men into the ranks of the likes of Al Qaeda.[27] This is why Charles Knight argues that the document "reflects a Hobbesian assumption that 'might makes right' wrapped in a sort of right-wing idealism about forcefully leading the world toward the rewards of freedom".[28] Edward Rhodes similarly points out that Bush seeks to construct a global liberal order underpinned by American military power.[29] This is not very surprising. Senior figures in the Bush Administration have long been standard-bearers for the Republican Right, espousing the view that the US has a special responsibility to ensure the preservation and promotion of an international order promoting freedom, on the basis that "what is right for America is right for the world".[30] This has led to suggestions that

a *Pax Americana* might underpin global security, and Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld's office even sponsored a private study to ascertain how previous empires such as Macedon under Alexander, Republican Rome and the Mongols, had remained *primus inter pares.*[31]

The Central Role of "Hard" Power in US Grand and Counter-Terrorist Strategy

Strongly reinforcing what Paul Kennedy calls the "odd combination of Wilsonian idealism and Reaganite muscularity"[32] of the Bush Administration has been the increasing importance of the military establishment as a factor in US foreign policy formulation.[33] Dana Priest observes that one reason for this has been the inexorable decline in the State Department's operating budget and staff strength since the 1970s. This caused successive administrations to turn to the Defence Department to take on tasks that had formerly been carried out by civilian agencies, such as de-mining, anti-narcotics operations, anti-terrorism, humanitarian disaster relief, and even disarmament.[34] Inevitably, the military instrument gradually assumed a central, even distorting, importance in policy circles. Hence William Pfaff avers that the "availability of overwhelming force" has influenced "the formulation of policy in ways that invite military remedies, even when these may be irrelevant".[35] Indeed, Andrew Bacevich notes that especially after September 11 "the Bush Administration no longer views force as the last resort; rather, it considers military power to be America's most effective instrument of statecraft".[36] Bacevich feels that the NSS candidly acknowledges the "progressively greater militarisation of US foreign policy".[37] In this regard, Washington has sought a massive increase in the defence budget not so much to respond to any "proximate threat' but more importantly to achieve "a margin of such unprecedented and unsurpassed superiority that no would-be adversary will even consider mounting a future challenge".[38]

In short, 9/11 brought the "hard" military and closely related law enforcement elements of US strategic discourse into sharper focus. Thus in Pfaff's prose, "military considerations and modes of thought" have predominated in Washington. This has encouraged an "uncritical recourse to military measures to deal not only with foreign policy crises but with such civil society issues as terrorism" for which "the only real solutions (where they exist) are political".[39] These "military considerations and modes of thought" have geared key Bush Administration officials towards adopting what the great French strategist Andre Beaufre would have called a direct strategy in the global war on terror.

That is, Washington has emphasised military power as the primary instrument of what Beaufre called "total strategy", with the various legal, administrative, diplomatic, economic and financial resources of several government agencies and Coalition partners orchestrated in close support of the principal military thrust.[40] Evidence of the "military considerations and modes of thought" that drive post-September 11 US grand strategy has not been confined to the new pre-emption doctrine applied against Baghdad — and might yet be applied against other rogue states suspected of possessing WMD or being engaged in their proliferation.[41] It is manifested in, *inter alia*, the expanded role of US Special Operations Forces worldwide;[42] the willingness to assassinate Al Qaeda elements located within the sovereign jurisdiction of another state;[43] the decision to retain global military freedom of action by not subjecting US servicemen to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court;[44] the painfully evident dearth of systematic, non-military, administrative planning for the governance of post-war Iraq;[45] and of particular concern to this essay, the thrust and actual application to Southeast Asia of the more narrowly focused US National Strategy for Countering Terrorism (NSCT), released in February 2003.

A follow-up document to the September 2002 NSS, the NSCT seeks to "stop terrorist attacks against the United States, its interests", and US "friends and allies around the world".[46] The ultimate aim is to "create an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and all those who support them".[47] To this end, the NSCT identifies a so-called "4D strategy". First, the US and its allies will "defeat terrorist organisations of global reach by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control and communications; material support; and finances". Second, they will "deny further sponsorship, support and sanctuary to terrorists by ensuring other states accept their responsibilities to take action against these international threats within their sovereign territory".[48] In this respect the NSCT identifies four categories of states: "willing and able", "weak but willing", "reluctant" and "unwilling".[49] The document asserts that while Washington would work with and assist the first two categories of partners in their fight against terrorism, it would "convince" reluctant partners to "change course and meet their international obligations".[50] As far as "unwilling states" are concerned, the document promises that the US would "act decisively to counter the threat they pose and ultimately, to compel them to cease supporting terrorism".[51] It would appear that Iraq in April 2003 was the first application of this policy directive.

A third "D" the NSCT identifies is the need for the US to defend the American homeland and its citizens and interests abroad, through

improving homeland security, better intelligence sharing, as well as enhanced protection of critical physical and information-based infrastructure at home and overseas.[52] Finally and significantly, in apparent recognition of the importance of Beaufrean "indirect" non-military elements, the NSCT adds that the US will also "diminish the underlying conditions" that terrorists seek to exploit.[53] In pursuit of this aim, on the one hand Washington will partner with the international community to strengthen weak and failed states. It is felt that helping these states improve governance, economic welfare, the rule of law and respect for human rights, would perhaps prevent them from being exploited as terrorist safe havens. In addition, Washington will work with its allies to "wage a war of ideas" aimed at delegitimising terrorism, undercut extremist ideologies and importantly, forge ahead toward attaining a "just and comprehensive settlement" of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.[54] While it is commendable that the importance of "diminishing underlying conditions" is explicitly recognised in the new US 4D strategy, a cautionary observation is in order. A close analysis of the key "Goals and Objectives" section of the NSCT that elaborates on the 4D strategy reveals that out of a total of 14 pages, less than three are devoted to an elaboration of the essentially non-coercive, non-military goal of "Diminishing the Underlying Conditions that Terrorists Seek to Exploit".[55] That this is rather suggestive of the dominant "military considerations and modes of thought" that imbue the NSCT document, is confirmed by the reality that in post-Bali Southeast Asia, it is the counter-terrorist "defeat" and "deny" elements of the US 4D strategy that remain centre stage in countering the threat of JI.

JI's "Functional Space" in Southeast Asia

The Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) network represents the key terrorist threat in Southeast Asia. Through its Rabitatul Mujahidin (RM) coordinating framework, JI, whose ideological and operational epicentre is Indonesia, has sought to build a coalition of radical Islamist groups in its quest to forcibly establish a *Daulah Islamiyah Nusantara* or a pan-Southeast Asian Islamic state. The RM was formed by JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir in late 1999 in Kuala Lumpur.[56] The first meeting, apart from JI core members, included elements from Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM); Laskar Jundullah and Darul Islam, Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and Republik Islam Aceh from Indonesia; the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) from the southern Philippines; the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO) and the Arakan Rohingya Nationalist Organisation (ARNO) from Myanmar; and the Pattani United Liberation

Organisation (PULO) from southern Thailand.[57] It must be emphasised that not all these groups share JI's transnational terrorist agenda. While the RM has not been particularly active,[58] it would be an error to disregard its significance. Because of the shared experience of *jihad* either in Afghanistan or Ambon in the Maluku archipelago in eastern Indonesia, a sense of "brotherhood" exists between disparate Southeast Asian radical Islamists, and the RM mechanism can, and has, crystallised this commodity for mutual assistance and support. Thus JI, in the spirit of the radical Islamist brotherhood exemplified by RM, mounted an attack on the Philippine Ambassador's home in Jakarta in August 2000, apparently in retaliation against Manila's clampdown on the MILF.[59] A few months later, in late December, JI colluded with MILF elements to stage bombings in Manila that killed 22 people. This was in retaliation for a major offensive by the Filipino armed forces that had earlier in the year resulted in the capture of more than 40 MILF camps in the southern Philippines.[60]

The RM should thus be seen as an informal, loose, but potentially force-multiplying extension of JI. It is the latter, however, that truly represents the transnational guiding intelligence of radical Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia. From Washington's perspective, it cannot be overemphasised that JI's ideology, thanks to the influence of Al Qaeda, incorporates significant anti-Western and especially anti-American elements. It is worth recognising in this respect that the Bali attack had been aimed at *Americans* rather than Australians.[61] Whatever its indigenous historical origins in the *Darul Islam* movement in Indonesia,[62] therefore, JI's global *jihad* vision makes it an Al Qaeda ally in Southeast Asia.[63] Moreover, JI's ambitions and organisational capacity renders it the centre of gravity of the radical Islamist terrorist threat in the theatre. In the prose of the US 4D strategy, defeating the JI network, denying it sanctuary, and diminishing its bases of support would have strategic effects within the region. At this time, however, JI remains a threat because of the functional and political space that it has been able to exploit.

JI's functional space — defined broadly as the freedom to carry out the various activities necessary to support the terrorist agenda — is expressed in several ways. First and foremost is the fact that the network's membership is very extensive, numbering, according to one recent authoritative estimate, "probably" in the "thousands".[64] Furthermore, JI possesses considerable expertise to cause mayhem. Included in its ranks are operatives such as Dr. Azahari Husin and Dulmatin, both of whom have the background and skills to construct powerful explosives such as the ones used in the Bali and Marriott blasts. In addition scores more militants have received training in weapons and explosives use in Mindanao since about 1997.[65] Additionally, JI's functional space

has been expressed through the relative ease with which militants, arms and money have circulated throughout the region. Part of the reason for this lies in geographical realities. The region is crisscrossed by waterways, and Indonesia and the Philippines especially, are fragmented archipelagic entities whose maritime boundaries are notoriously difficult to police even at the best of times. Thus the maritime approaches to significant swathes of Indonesian and Filipino territory remain inadequately monitored, expediting the movement of Southeast Asian militants. During the Maluku conflict (1999–2002), Malaysian JI would travel from Tawao, at the southern tip of Sabah, through Nunukan at the northern tip of East Kalimantan, thence across to Manado in North Sulawesi and on to Ambon in Maluku province. Arms shipments from MILF caches in Mindanao also made their way to Ambon by sea via the North Sulawesi transit node.[66] In April 2003 Jakarta and Manila expressed concern about 300 Indonesian JI militants that had entered the southern Philippines and dispersed throughout Mindanao. In fact the Filipino police suspect that some of these Indonesian JI may have perpetrated bomb attacks in Davao City in March and April 2003.[67]

Geography aside, the weak regulatory capacities of some governments also contributes to JI's functional space. One problem lies in still-inadequate border controls. Lax immigration and visa requirements continue to allow dubious figures into some Southeast Asian states. Thus the Filipino authorities reported in late March 2003 that a four-man Middle Eastern Al Qaeda cell, armed with "substantial amounts of money", had entered central Mindanao. They were apparently able to enter legally either as "tourists, preachers, or as spouses of Filipinas".[68] Illegal entry is another problem. While on the one hand this might be due to corrupt immigration officials at the port of entry, not all immigration authorities in the region possess the expertise to detect forged travel documents and visas.[69] Key JI leader Hambali, prior to his arrest in August 2003, had managed to slip into Thailand through a northern border crossing from Laos or Myanmar, prompting Bangkok to wonder how he had managed to elude immigration checks despite possessing a Spanish passport. It was speculated that he might have secured the false document from Thailand itself.[70] In fact, elements of foreign criminal syndicates from the Middle East and South Asia have exploited Bangkok's lax immigration rules, coming in as tourists and businessmen, and engaged in producing high quality forged passports and identity papers. The latter have been used by "worldwide Islamic terrorist networks" to facilitate terrorist movement both within and without Southeast Asia.[71] It is significant that JI has cultivated actively *preman* (criminal) elements to "arrange illegal border crossings from Indonesia to Malaysia

or the Philippines; to secure false identity papers; and to transport people and goods".[72]

Critically, JI's functional space has been enhanced by the inability of some Southeast Asian states to effectively track dubious electronic money transfers, due to poorly regulated financial systems. This problem is especially acute in the case of Manila and Bangkok, as Middle Eastern individuals transact huge amounts of funds and deposits.[73] The problem of poor regulation extends to foreign charities, especially Saudi ones, which have operated within Southeast Asia for years. One such Saudi charity, al Haramain, has been used by Al Qaeda to channel funds to JI.[74] Another way in which Al Qaeda money has been laundered into the region is through the setting up of front companies, especially in Malaysia. These companies have not only masked the funding of terrorist activities but have also generated revenue to be ploughed back into those activities.[75] In addition, several terrorist organisations, including Al Qaeda and Hezbollah, have used Thailand as a transit point for collecting money from international donors.[76] Finally, Southeast Asia has an extensive *hawala* network, as hundreds of thousands of Indonesians, Filipinos and Thais work overseas, particularly in West Asia.[77] Compounding matters is the relatively low cost of medium-scale terrorist attacks like the Bali tragedy. Rather than hundreds of thousands of dollars, the operation is estimated to have cost only about US$30,000.[78] Given the combination of the huge volume of financial flows in and around the region, variations in regulatory capacities amongst states, and the modest sums involved in mounting terrorist strikes, isolating and tracking funding intended for terrorist operations in the region is an excruciatingly difficult enterprise.

Serious regulatory weaknesses also help explain the relative accessibility of weapons and explosives. The extremely lucrative arms trade in Southeast Asia has its locus in Thailand and Cambodia. According to an estimate by Panitan Wattanyagorn, one-third of the arms flowing through the region are smuggled out from former war zones in Cambodia. Another third come from China, via Laos and Thailand. A third come from illegal arms sales by rogue Thai military elements. Some of these weapons have found their way to radical Islamist groups in the Philippines and Indonesia.[79] Unsurprisingly, official corruption is another source of weapons and explosives. The Abu Sayyaf Group in Mindanao for instance, flush with cash from criminal activities, has been able to buy arms from soldiers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).[80] Similarly, weapons, ammunition and explosives have mysteriously been siphoned off from Indonesian military depots.[81] The largesse of sympathetic military elements are yet another source. During the Maluku conflict, for instance, it

was known that elements of the Indonesian military (TNI) trained and funded the militant anti-Christian Laskar Jihad.[82] Finally, "soft" security force targets also provide militants with the means to do harm. In late April 2003 suspected Islamist militants were able to steal more than 30 weapons after mounting simultaneous attacks on two Thai military outposts in the southern Muslim states of Yala and Narathiwat.[83]

Exacerbating matters is one more factor: the varying levels of political commitment amongst Southeast Asian governments to the US-led War on Terror. There are two key reasons for this. First, several Southeast Asian states have significant Muslim communities whose concerns about the perceived US bias against Islam need to be accommodated in order to forestall the possibility of a domestic backlash. This is an important issue that will be analysed more carefully shortly. Second, the region has yet to fully recover from the devastating effects of the 1997/1998 Asian financial crisis, and thus governments, eager to attract both foreign investors and tourists, are naturally loathe to buttress the impression often created in the Western media that their territories are radical Islamist terrorist hotbeds. This second factor helps explain Jakarta's heavily criticised hands-off stance before the Bali attacks, and it may explain Bangkok's noncommittal official posture before August 2003, when it finally introduced tougher legislation to counter terrorist activity.[84] The image factor also explains why Jakarta and Bangkok, as well as other Southeast Asian governments, have been very prickly about the issuance of terrorism-related travel warnings by the United States and other Western countries. Tourism, for instance, generates six percent of GDP for Thailand.[85]

US Counter-Terrorist Strategy in Southeast Asia: Shutting Down JI's Functional Space

At the time of writing it would be fair to assert that the US and its Southeast Asian partners have focused on eliminating the immediate, operational threat emanating from JI. In other words, theirs is a counter-terrorist approach seeking to detain militants and close down the network's functional space. This thrust was formalised in the US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism, initialed on 1 August 2002. The Declaration committed the US and its ASEAN partners to several initiatives: continuing and improving "intelligence and terrorist financing information sharing"; developing "more effective counter-terrorism policies and legal, regulatory and administrative counter-terrorism regimes"; enhancing liaison between law enforcement agencies; strengthening "capacity-building efforts" through "training

and education"; consultations between "officials, analysts and field operators"; joint operations; and providing assistance on "transportation, border and immigration control challenges" to "stem effectively the flow of terrorist-related material, money and people".[86]

This counter-terrorist thrust against the JI threat in particular has been operationalised through a three-tier approach: first, isolating the network from extra-regional financial and operational assistance; second, disrupting the intra-regional financial, logistical and manpower flows that enable JI to operate and possibly exploit its wider RM partnerships; and third, eliminating active JI cells physically located within national boundaries throughout the region.

Isolating Southeast Asia from extra-regional manpower and financial inflows

Washington is aware that some Southeast Asian states should be assisted in hardening their borders against extra-regional inflows of terrorist expertise, particular from Al Qaeda. Malaysia for example, until recently, did not require visas for citizens of OIC states. In addition, foreigners can easily marry Filipino citizens and "effectively change their identity".[87] Nevertheless, visa and entry requirements have gradually been tightened. In addition the real problem of forged travel documents has been recognised and discussed for instance, in March 2003 at the first ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional meeting on Terrorism and Transnational Crime, co-chaired by Malaysia and the US. Nevertheless, there remains much to be done to overcome the real problem of inadequate computerisation of immigration databases.[88] In addition, corruption amongst front-line immigration officials, especially those in remoter areas, also needs firmer tackling. Singapore JI leader Mas Selamat Kastari, after slipping into Indonesia to elude the December 2001 crackdown on his group, obtained an Indonesian passport in Surabaya with a five-year validity, by using a false nom de guerre, Edi Hariyanto.[89]

In addition, much more can be done to "seal" the region off from external Al Qaeda financing. The ASEAN states have agreed to work toward early accession to all UN conventions on terrorism such as the 1999 International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.[90] As of December 2002, Singapore had become a party to the latter Convention while the Philippines had signed but not yet ratified it.[91] In addition, the FBI has assisted Thailand in installing sophisticated money-tracking software for its new anti-money-laundering centre in Bangkok.[92] Meanwhile,

Kuala Lumpur hosted an anti-money laundering seminar in July 2003 for ASEAN members,[93] while Thailand, the European Union and the United Kingdom signed a Memorandum of Understanding on a new three-year anti-money laundering project, based in Bangkok. This programme will provide training and technical assistance in anti-money laundering best practices.[94]

Disrupting intra-regional militant logistical and manpower flows

In addition, attempts have already been made to reduce terrorist functional space by making maritime crossings more difficult. Three principal transit points for "men, money and weapons involved in Southeast Asian terrorism" are the Riau archipelago, the Indonesian–Malaysian border region in eastern Kalimantan, and the island of Sulawesi, which has traditional trading links with the southern Philippine island of Mindanao.[95] It is little wonder that many JI militants in Kalimantan have trained in Mindanao with the MILF, and that key JI-linked Indonesian militants based in Sulawesi, such as Syawal Yasin, have reportedly "strong ties to the southern Philippines".[96] Another key arms and people smuggling zone, the northern Straits of Malacca between the North Aceh coastline and southern Thailand, has been heavily used by the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) to smuggle weapons from southern Thai territory. The Indonesian navy admits it lacks the resources to patrol the zone effectively.[97] Washington is moving to redress the capacity shortfalls of certain ASEAN navies. The Philippine navy, currently struggling to patrol the seaward approaches to Mindanao and Basilan from North Sulawesi, will receive patrol boats as well as other defence-related articles as part of the State Department's 2004 aid package.[98] In addition, in May 2003 Washington granted Manila Major Non-NATO Ally Status, giving it enhanced access to US equipment and supplies, while agreeing to launch a comprehensive review of Manila's defence needs to ascertain "how the United States can best support the Philippine military".[99] Furthermore, under the ASEAN Co-operation Plan, launched in December 2002, the US, *inter alia*, will co-operate with ASEAN in coping with transnational issues with maritime elements such as piracy, terrorism, drug and people trafficking.[100]

Neutralising JI cells within national territories throughout the region

Apart from attempting to "seal" the region off from external financial and operational succor from the likes of Al Qaeda, and weakening JI's freedom of

movement within the region, the third tier of the counter-terrorist approach designed to shut down the network's functional space involves state-level intelligence and law enforcement measures to identify, locate and destroy JI cells within national boundaries. In this respect Indonesia, the locus classicus of JI, remains the key state. An Indonesian analyst working closely with the police investigation into the Bali attacks has estimated that there are about 1,000 JI members in Indonesia.[101] While since the Bali attacks Jakarta has apprehended several key Indonesian JI militants, the threat has not diminished. Key JI leaders remain at large, and are the subjects of a massive manhunt being undertaken by ASEAN and other police forces. Following the capture of Hambali in Thailand in August 2003, many analysts pointed out that there were still leaders with "strategic capabilities" who could conceivably replace him.[102]

Even prior to the Bali attacks, ASEAN states had been actively exchanging information with one another on terrorist movements. This has led to the capture of many JI militants. For instance, in June 2003, Thai police, acting on information provided by their Singapore counterparts, arrested three alleged Thai JI militants in Narathiwat, southern Thailand. The trio had allegedly been planning attacks on embassies as well as tourist spots in Bangkok, Pattaya and Phuket.[103] Moreover, Jakarta in August 2003 pushed for even closer regional co-operation through the creation of a "security community". The initiative called for, *inter alia*, a centralised regional database on terrorists; the streamlining of legal processes in counter-terror operations; the blocking of terror assets; joint training programmes; and easier access to terrorist suspects detained in member states for interrogation purposes.[104] Moreover, in the spirit of the US-ASEAN Joint Declaration on Combating Terrorism, regional police agencies have surmounted capacity shortfalls by actively co-operating with both the US and other partners such as Australia. For instance, the Australian Federal Police assisted its Indonesian counterparts in investigating the bomb blast at Jakarta's international airport in late April 2003. Significantly, despite the occasional prickly relations between the two states, the Indonesians acknowledged openly that by exploiting the "sophisticated forensic equipment" of the Australians, they would hopefully "solve this case faster".[105] In addition, several ASEAN states, including Indonesia and the Philippines, have signed Memoranda of Understanding with the US and Australia to forge closer co-operation between law enforcement agencies. Under these arrangements, both the Australians and the FBI have provided training in up-to-date investigative techniques to the Indonesian and Filipino police.[106] In addition, in August 2002 Washington committed US$47 million

to upgrading the Indonesian police, including establishing a special police counter-terrorism unit.[107] That there is a pressing need to enhance the professionalism of some Southeast Asian police forces was brought home forcefully by the circumstances surrounding the escape of JI explosives expert Fathur Rohman Al-Ghozi from detention in Camp Crame, Manila in July 2003. One police guard was asleep and another out shopping, and apparently Al-Ghozi and two Abu Sayyaf inmates simply "walked along the main hallway, down the stairs to the ground floor and left through the main gate". Moreover, the jailbreak was discovered only five hours later.[108]

As mentioned, corruption is another factor that erodes the capacity of regional states to eliminate JI cells within their territories. This has been caused in part by the fact that central governmental writ does not extend adequately to remote regions. Graft also occurs because many police and military commanders and their men on the ground are so poorly paid that they need to supplement their incomes by other means. While pure self-aggrandisement of course cannot be completely ruled out, poor salaries have surely been a factor prompting elements of the Thai, Indonesian and Philippine militaries, for instance, to sell weapons and explosives to both criminals and terrorists. A lasting solution to the problem of corruption in some Southeast states requires increasing the capacity of central governments to not only expand their administrative coverage effectively, but also pay better salaries.[109] These measures can only be achieved with bigger central budgets, which in turn depend on jump-starting economies still recovering from the Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998. The Bush Administration has recognised this. Under the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative, inked in October 2002, Washington has begun exploring the potential for establishing a "network of bilateral FTAs" in order to "increase trade and investment".[110]

Finally, sustained political will is needed if Southeast Asian governments are to successfully eradicate JI cells. As noted, not all Southeast Asian states have been demonstrating this commodity with equal fervour. The decision in early September 2003 by a Jakarta court to sentence alleged JI *amir* Abu Bakar Bashir to a mere four years instead of the 15 demanded by prosecutors, underscores this reality.[111] To employ the terms favoured in the Bush Administration's NSCT document, some Southeast Asian states have been "willing", and others "reluctant". The reality is not reducible to simple black and white terms, however. The essential concern, even in relatively "willing" states such as Singapore and Malaysia, is that if governments are seen to be too closely aligned with the US, this would provoke an electoral and even militant Muslim backlash. The problem is that amongst Southeast Asian Muslims — both

"radicals" and "moderates" — the US is generally perceived to be against Islam.[112] In other words, there exists amongst pockets of Southeast Asian Muslims, to widely varying degrees, a modicum of sympathy for JI, even if the vast majority of Muslims deplore utterly the network's *modus operandi*. This in turn generates what might be called political space within which JI can sustain itself. JI's political space complements and in truth, empowers the network's functional space. It is worth recognising two facts in this regard. First, only about 30 people were involved in the Bali operation. Second, as noted the cost of the Bali attack ran into tens of thousands of dollars rather than millions of dollars. The reality therefore is that only a relative handful of militants, including a couple with some knowledge of explosives, and having access to a moderate amount of funding, are all that is needed to inflict catastrophic damage. In other words, JI requires relatively minimal functional space to wreak havoc. It therefore becomes utterly crucial to undermine JI's ability to *attract* adherents in the first place. In short, one should seek to shut down JI's political space, and not just its functional space.[113]

The Problem of JI's "Political Space": Ideology is the Key

Because JI elicits some sympathy from scattered Muslim communities, for example in southern Thailand, northern Malaysia, Indonesia and the southern Philippines, the network has been able to generate funds, secure safe houses for militants, receive tip-offs on impending police raids, and recruit additional militants.[114] For example, JI militants have sought refuge amongst the conservative Muslim community in Sulawesi, which the network regards as having considerable "potential for true *jihad*".[115] Other pockets of JI support are dispersed throughout the region. Apart from personal networks established by school and marriage ties,[116] the key factor that underlies JI's wider political space is radical Islamist ideology. This ideology perpetuates an adversarial mindset toward non-Muslim and moderate Muslim polities and societies, and is characterised by a strong anti-American element. This ideological framework is in turn strengthened both by US foreign policy errors and failures, as well as concrete localised political and socioeconomic grievances.

It has been said with good reason that Southeast Asian Islam has traditionally been tolerant and peaceful, quite capable of co-existing with other great civilisation streams in the region such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity. Nevertheless more fundamentalist versions of Islam have been brought back by Southeast Asian Muslims either studying in the Middle East or making the *haj* since the 16th century. Hence especially over the past three decades,

there has been a discernible increase in Islamic orthodoxy in dress, diet and social practices in regional Muslim communities.[117] However, the latter phenomenon is not to be equated with radical jihadi ideology. The central thrust of the Islamic fundamentalist or Salafiyyah movement that emerged in Southeast Asia most pronouncedly in the 1980s was to revive Islamic identity by reasserting the unity of God (*tawhid*) in all spheres of life. Rather than seeing the world in stark black and white terms, the emphasis was on creating a just and equitable social order through the gradual Islamisation of society from the bottom up. Anwar Ibrahim's *Angkata Belia Islam Malaysia* (ABIM) social organisation in Malaysia has been closely associated with this type of programme.[118] Somewhat similarly, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Justice Party) in Indonesia is an example of an Islamic fundamentalist political party that seeks a gradual Islamisation of society through the propagation of Islamic values. In fact Partai Keadilan Sejahtera is the fastest growing political party in Indonesia, largely because of its clean image. Both ABIM and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera have been influenced deeply by the gradualist, Islamisation-from-below ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.[119]

At the risk of simplifying a very complex reality, it would seem that the real roots of radical Islamism lie in the emergence, in both the Middle East and in Southeast Asia, of neo-Salafism, which blends the return-to-roots fundamentalism of traditional Salafism with the additional ideational thread of an Islam under siege from Christian, Zionist and secular forces.[120] Saudi-funded and influenced neo-Salafiyyah *pesantren* in Southeast Asia thus propagate, over and above the traditional Salafiyyah call to return to a pristine unadulterated form of Islam, the injunction to distance oneself from Sufi Muslims, Shiite Muslims, Christians and other moderate Muslims. Neo-Salafiyyah *pesantren*, while by no means dominant amongst Indonesia's religious schools, have nevertheless, according to former Indonesian foreign minister Alwi Shihab, permitted "stricter interpretations of Islam to gain favour". Shihab adds that the rise of such a "rigid interpretation" of the Islamic faith has had "consequences".[121]

One utterly crucial consequence has been the propagation of an "inflexible, scripturalist", " 'us versus them', 'good versus evil', 'right versus wrong' and 'permitted (*halal*) versus prohibited (*haram*)' view of life".[122] In Southeast Asia, Islamist political parties like PAS in Malaysia as well as social organisations like Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI), Komite Pengerakan Syariat Islam (KPSI), Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII) and Hizbut Tahrir in Indonesia, generally propagate such binary worldviews. While it is true that such political parties and social organisations appear willing to attain their

Islamist agendas gradually by working peacefully within existing political systems, the problem is that the dividing line between neo-Salafism and violent radical Salafism is rather thin. Thus the intrinsic rejectionist neo-Salafiyyah impulse animates the violent activities of disparate Southeast Asian radical Salafiyyah groups such as Laskar Mujahidin, Front Pembala Islam — and JI. Thus while neo-Salafiyyah ideology may not in and of itself promote violence directly, it certainly engenders an exclusionist mindset that may prove readily radicalisable in certain circumstances.[123]

Thus the small number of so-called "Ivy League" radical Salafiyyah *pesantren* "that constitute the JI's educational circle" in Indonesia, which the International Crisis Group argues are incubating a new breed of "*salafi jihadists*", is not the only problem.[124] The circulation of neo-Salafiyyah ideology in some Southeast Asian Muslim quarters, propagated especially by Saudi-funded *pesantren* and mosques, creates arguably a visceral openness to JI's pan-Southeast Asian Islamic state agenda, and by implication, political space within which JI can not merely attract recruits but also sustain itself. The role of sympathisers who are not necessarily JI operatives themselves in arranging safe houses, acting as guides and arranging travel throughout Southeast Asia for JI militants bears testimony to how a neo-Salifiyyah ideological milieu can be hospitable to the radical Salifiyyah agenda.[125] This affinity may also explain why key leaders of MMI, ostensibly a nonviolent Islamist organisation, have close links with JI.[126] It is of no small significance either that senior PAS leader Hadi Awang maintained contact with Agus Dwikarna, who prior to his detention in the Philippines on terrorism related charges in March 2002, had served as both MMI secretary-general and head of Laskar Jundullah, a JI-linked Islamist militia that took part in anti-Christian fighting in Sulawesi.[127] It is even more noteworthy that Nik Adli Nik Aziz, the son of PAS spiritual leader Nik Aziz Nik Mat, was detained by Kuala Lumpur in August 2001 for his alleged leadership role in the militant KMM group that seeks to set up an Islamic state in Malaysia by force. Moreover, both Nik Adli and an unnamed official from PAS attended the 1999 meeting in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia that set up the Rabitatul Mujahidin.[128] Radical Salafism may not be identical to, but it surely feeds upon, a puritanical neo-Salafiyyah diet.

Neo-Salafiyyah ideological currents also aid and abet JI's political space by imparting a degree of credibility to radical Islamist propaganda that Washington is working with Israel to attack fellow Muslims such as the Palestinians, Iraqis and Afghans. It is instructive to realise that it is not merely militant Islamists that dislike and even abhor America. Even Southeast Asian Muslims that are quite willing to practise their faith within essentially secular

political frameworks believe fervently that US foreign policy is biased against the realm of Islam. The June 2003 Pew survey cited earlier found that an overwhelming 83 percent of Indonesian Muslims, well known for their moderate Islam, had an unfavourable impression of the US.[129] This image of the US as duplicitous explains why some Muslims in Southeast Asia believed that the CIA was behind both the 11 September 2001 World Trade Center attack as well as the Bali blasts of 12 October 2002.[130] Similarly, following the Marriott bombing of August 2003, a number of Indonesians believed that the CIA again perpetrated the attack, exploiting the supposedly fictitious JI organisation to camouflage the real US aim of discrediting Islam, destabilising Indonesia and taking control of the country.[131] Amongst Indonesian university students, exposed to neo-Salafiyyah ideological currents through for instance, DDII *dakwah* (proselytising) activities on campus, there is "growing acceptance" of the notion that the Islamic world is under attack by Western forces such as the US, and crucially, "must be defended — with violence if necessary".[132] No surprise then, that JI's declared anti-American programme and associated propaganda is therefore another factor that wins it a modicum of legitimacy, and political space, in some Muslim quarters.

Generalised Muslim antipathy toward America stems from one single issue in particular: the plight of the Palestinians and the status of Jerusalem. As the site of the Al Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem is, after Mecca and Medina, the third holiest place in Islam, while the suffering of the stateless Palestinians has served as a metaphor for the suffering of Muslims as a whole in the face of a supposed Zionist-Crusader conspiracy. As Ahmad Suhelmi, an Islamic scholar at the University of Indonesia, puts it, the "*ummah* is a unity that cannot be divided", and like a human body, "if you hurt even one little finger the whole body feels the pain".[133] In this respect it is reassuring that the US 4D strategy recognises the central importance of the Palestinian issue, and that President Bush himself has now committed his energies to seeking a settlement.[134] However the strategy does not go far enough in identifying and seeking to eliminate other sources of what might be called "political oxygen" which JI might exploit to recruit more followers.

For example, the slowness of America and the West to intervene in Bosnia to prevent Serb ethnic cleansing of the Muslims only confirmed in the minds of Muslims in the region, as elsewhere, that the *ummah* could expect no favours from the US. One former Malaysian army officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Abdul Manaf Kasmuri, who served with a Malaysian armoured regiment operating as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia between 1993 and 1994, was himself radicalised as a result of what

he perceived as Western unwillingness to halt the atrocities committed against Bosnian Muslims. He established contact with Al Qaeda in Bosnia and later joined JI.[135] Significantly, US military operations have also tended to generate political oxygen. The US-Afghan air campaign of late 2001, while operationally successful in ousting the Taliban, nonetheless generated numerous civilian casualties, which again reinforced the perception, despite the disclaimers to the contrary by President Bush, that America was at war with Islam. Indeed, anger at the US attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 was one critical factor that prompted Imam Samudra, a key planner of the Bali attacks, to perpetrate the latter.[136]

In fact the suffering of Muslims anywhere, especially where the US is directly involved — as in the instance of collateral civilian casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan — can, as liberal Muslim scholar Akbar Ahmed points out, be "used by extremists" to "reinforce this feeling that all Muslims are under attack".[137] JI leaders are certainly skilled in exploiting every egregious instance of inadvertent US military strikes against Muslim civilians in order to reinforce the stock ideological narrative of an America bent on annihilating Muslims. JI leaders, like their Al Qaeda mentors, are Internet-savvy, technically proficient and have been known to buttress their propaganda by producing videotapes and VCDs of purported violence against Muslims by Christians, as during the Maluku conflict that erupted in 1999. Such media are then used for recruitment purposes.[138] Worryingly, Jusuf Wanandi, a leading Indonesian analyst points out that Indonesian Muslims were "influenced by vignettes shown on television about the miseries of the Iraqi people due to war."[139] Given that satellite channels like Al Jazeera tend to emphasise American mistakes and shortcomings in Afghanistan and Iraq, JI might well exploit such footage to empower "storylines" emphasizing that Islam is under siege everywhere — and that a true Muslim would be willing to engage in global *jihad* to defend his oppressed brethren. US errors thus generate political oxygen that JI can filter through its virulent ideological framework to sustain political space for itself within the region.[140]

It has been suggested that "terrorism is a global problem with numerous local roots".[141] Certainly, in some Southeast Asian countries, local "root causes" such as political and socioeconomic marginalisation are the key sources of political space for JI. In this regard, the RSO and MILF, JI's informal partners in the RM coalition, are particularly important. The MILF element is utterly crucial to the war on terror in Southeast Asia as it falls within JI's Mantiqi 3, designated for training of JI militants. Mindanao is thus the Southeast Asian equivalent of Afghanistan in the 1980s and early 1990s: a vast training

area for would-be *jihadist*.[142] While the MILF's old Camp Abu Bakar complex was overrun by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in 2000, by September 2002 new MILF training areas had re-emerged in Mindanao. These were training both Filipinos for the MILF as well as Indonesians and Malaysians sent by JI.[143] In Mindanao, despite Manila's efforts to improve the lot of the people, "widespread Christian prejudice, corruption and mistreatment has not won many hearts or minds".[144] In late March 2003, MILF senior commander Murad Ebrahim claimed that the organisation was getting too big and difficult to control as "there are so many who wanted to join".[145]

In Myanmar, on the other hand, the continuing political, religious and socioeconomic repression by Yangon of the Rohingya Muslims in the Arakan region contiguous to Bangladesh, has generated support for the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), which has a presence on Bangladeshi soil and seeks to set up an Islamic Republic in Arakan. The RSO insurgency has been regarded by Bangladeshi military intelligence as "an extremely militant model of Islamic revolution".[146] In this regard it should be recognised that some JI militants, through the Rohingya conduit, have used Bangladesh to regroup.[147] The Bangladeshi government has exacerbated matters by being slow to move decisively against the burgeoning number of militant Islamist terrorist groups on its soil.[148] The anger of many Filipino and Rohingya Muslims at their respective governments not only strengthens the MILF and RSO. The pan-regional JI, whose *modus operandi* has involved fishing in troubled regional waters seeking opportunities for exploitation, has leveraged on Moro and Rohingya grievances to promote its ideological vision, thereby gaining strategic benefits and political space.

In order to effectively neutralise the JI terrorist threat over the medium to longer term, and the wider problem of exclusionist Islam in the region, it would be necessary to move beyond the necessary but by no means sufficient immediate counter-terrorist measures, and embrace more systematically longer-term counter-terrorism elements. While a counter-terrorist approach that renders terrorist leaders and militants "inoperative" might reduce JI's functional space,[149] a counter-terrorism thrust is needed to close the network's all-important political space: to reiterate, it is utterly critical to destroy JI's capacity to attract recruits and sympathisers to its cause.

Developing a Counter-Terrorism Thrust

To diminish JI's political space within pockets of Southeast Asian Muslim communities; three key counter-terrorism thrusts are necessary: eradicating local

political and socioeconomic "root causes"; assisting progressive Islamists win the ideological battle for Islam in Southeast Asia; and reducing the "political oxygen" issuing from US policy and behaviour that fuel regional radical Islamist propaganda that the America is attacking the worldwide *ummah*.

Eradicating local root causes

With respect to the MILF issue, Washington must move beyond simply helping the Armed Forces of the Philippines augment its military capabilities in its campaign against the thuggish Abu Sayyaf Group. Mindanao, the locus of the Moro insurgency JI is seeking to hijack, is "not amenable to a military solution. It is a domestic social and economic problem".[150] The Filipino Agrarian Reform Secretary has asserted that the key to achieving peace in Mindanao is "land reform".[151] The US should more actively coordinate international efforts to assist Manila in implementing schemes aimed at improving basic education, increasing employment by creating small to medium-scale industries, and providing university scholarships for Muslim Mindanese.[152] In addition, Washington should assist Manila to expand its capacity to administer Mindanao effectively and marginalise those MILF elements with JI sympathies and links[153] in favour of Moro leaders with genuinely nationalist credentials.[154] As far as Myanmar is concerned, Washington should either directly or indirectly through ASEAN, insist that Yangon pursue a more accommodationist policy toward the Rohingyas, and work towards granting a degree of regional autonomy to the Muslims in the Arakan region. Washington should also work with the UN in alleviating the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and help finance the social and economic rehabilitation of Arakan. Reducing the sources of Moro and Rohingya discontent would help undercut the JI ideological appeal and have a significant impact on the network's ability to preserve political space in these communities.

Assisting moderate Islamists win the battle for the soul of Islam

To secure victory in the so-called "battle for the soul of Islam" in Southeast Asia, one must begin with Indonesia, which is not merely the operational but also the ideological locus of JI. Two steps are essential: first, the US should work with Southeast Asian governments and with mainstream Muslim authorities such as NU and Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, to ensure that the teachings of progressive Muslim *ulamas* and intellectuals are given greater airing in the print media, on television, radio, cyberspace and in the mosques, universities

and *pesantrens* of Southeast Asia. Of particular importance, a strong effort must be made to propagate amongst Indonesian and other Southeast Asian Islamic fundamentalist communities, what the well-known Tunisian scholar Rachid Ghannoushi calls a "realistic fundamentalism". This approach involves not only reviving Islamic values in all aspects of life, but also taking full cognisance of current social, economic and political realities, as well as acknowledging the value of religious pluralism.[155]

The Swiss-born scholar Tariq Ramadan similarly calls for the elimination of "binary vision" that sees "everything as either *halal* or *haram*", as well the "they (non-Muslims) don't like us" adversarial attitude.[156] It is noteworthy in this regard that some US funding in 2003 was channelled to NU and Muhammadiyah to "promote tolerance among adherents of different faiths" as well as to "fight terrorism".[157] Apart from Islamic scholars from outside Southeast Asia, it must not be forgotten that Indonesia is an especially rich source of moderate, progressive, Arabic-speaking scholars who are well drilled in Islamic jurisprudence and thus able to engage in ideological combat with radicals.[158] They, however, may need to be assisted in putting their message across in ways that ordinary Indonesians and other Southeast Asians understand.[159] Public relations specialists may thus have a role to play in rendering the progressive Islamist voice more attractive than that of the radicals.[160] In addition, copying JI publicity methods might be salutary. Thus VCDs and videotapes should be mass-produced and distributed in rural areas especially, where JI tends to recruit its foot-soldiers.[161]

Second, it should also be recognised that if thousands of Southeast Asian Muslim youth were gainfully employed, there would be less opportunities for them to be exposed to radical interpretations of Islam. One unfortunate by-product of the post-Bali disbandment of Laskar Jihad and FPI was that "thousands of young, poorly educated and violence-hardened Muslim militants" had nothing else to do but to listen to militant preachers "preach suspicion of and confrontation with followers of other religions".[162] This in itself is good reason for the US and other partners to assist Indonesia and other Southeast Asian governments generate greater economic expansion through greater trade and investment creation. This is why the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative discussed earlier is one idea that should be vigorously pursued.

In the key state of Indonesia, over time counter-terrorism elements such as extensive, sustained ideological counter-propaganda, increasing economic opportunities and the emergence of a stable democratic milieu capable of accommodating all varieties of political expression, would diminish the appeal

of a range of radical Salafiyyah groups ranging from the transnational terrorist JI to indigenous violent groupings such as FPI and Laskar Jundullah, to non-violent but exclusionist, neo-Salafiyyah movements such as MMI, KPSI and Hizbut Tahrir. The traditionally eclectic, tolerant form of Indonesian Islam would be strengthened, and would have important "knock-on" effects throughout the region. At the same time, a JI de-legitimised ideologically would see its political space in Southeast Asia much reduced.

Reducing the "political oxygen" that fuels anti-Americanism

To counter the JI campaign to portray an America seeking to subjugate and annihilate the worldwide *ummah*, three steps are vital. First, Washington must ensure that its public diplomacy highlights in great detail how America has genuinely helped alleviate the plight of Muslims in Kuwait, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and now Iraq. However, care should be taken in crafting messages. A recent $15-million public relations campaign, sponsored by the State Department and produced by the advertising firm McCann-Erickson, showcased the lives of Muslims in America but featured no Southeast Asian Muslims. Indonesian Muslims watching the advertisements were upset that the State Department appeared to believe that "Muslims only lived in Arab countries and only those Muslims migrated to the United States".[163] A better approach would be for material to be fed to sympathetic Southeast Asian print and broadcast media as well as NGOs, and allow them to create authentically local news websites, newspapers, television programmes, documentaries, videotapes and VCDs about how America has tried to be a friend of Islam. These should be given the widest possible distribution throughout Southeast Asia, especially in eastern Indonesia and the southern Philippines, areas that fall under JI's Mantiqi 3, the so-called recruitment region.[164]

Second, America must not undercut its own public diplomacy by inadvertently generating political oxygen that can be exploited by JI for propaganda purposes. Any air strike or military/law enforcement operation that accidentally kills, injures or brutalises Afghan or Iraqi civilians would only generate political oxygen that JI can exploit to fuel anti-Americanism. Importantly, Washington must in the short term take care to ensure that US forces in both Afghanistan and Iraq are better trained to cope with looting and rioting. Any resort to disproportionate force as demonstrated in the unfortunate Falluja incident in late April 2003 in which 15 Iraqis were killed by US troops during an anti-American rally, would only strengthen the anti-US,

global *jihad* propaganda of JI recruiters.[165] Over the longer term, it is vital that Washington expends sufficient resources in both Iraq and Afghanistan to ensure that both states emerge as modern, progressive Muslim members of the international community.[166] At the time of writing Washington has yet to commit either sufficient troops or funds to ensure the rehabilitation of both states.[167] If the US does not stay the course in both Iraq and Afghanistan, this would further reinforce the JI ideological narrative of a "Crusader" America at war with Islam, and in Southeast Asia, help sustain political space for JI. The new Office of Global Communications, created by Executive Order of the President in January 2003, might take the lead in ensuring that Washington's words and deeds project the same positive message to a sceptical Muslim world.[168] Finally, the US must ensure that it persists in seeking the creation of an independent, viable Palestinian state side-by-side with Israel, and that the status of Jerusalem is justly resolved.[169] By consciously and deliberately identifying and eliminating the sources of the political oxygen that feed anti-American sentiment amongst Muslims, Washington, over time, will gradually deprive the radical and neo-Salafiyyah ideological appeal in Southeast Asia of their potency, and in so doing close JI's political space as well.

Conclusion

The progressive militarisation of US foreign policy and grand strategy especially after September 11 has resulted in the elaboration of an approach to combating radical Islamist terrorism, the so-called 4D strategy, that despite its apparent concession to the importance of diminishing the underlying conditions which terrorists seek to exploit, has in fact been driven by a military/law enforcement, or counter-terrorist, focus. In the case of Southeast Asia, while such a counter-terrorist emphasis may be effective in reducing the functional space of JI to operate, it would do nothing to counter the transnational radical Salafiyyah ideology the network is imbued with. This would be strategically inefficient, as a surviving ideology would sustain a steady stream of replacements for JI leaders and foot soldiers captured or eliminated, as well as the political space within which militants may elude detection and secure moral and material support. The terrorist threat would thus be self-sustaining. Moreover, as a devastating terror attack on the scale of Bali would require a relatively modest number of individuals and amount of funds to perpetrate, implying that relatively little functional space is all that would be needed, it becomes obvious that the underlying ideology must not be allowed to persist; it must be attacked and discredited. In other words, not only must JI's functional

space be closed, its ideologically sustained political space must be reduced or eliminated as well.

Hence the dominant short-term counter-terrorist thrust of the US 4D strategy must be balanced by a much greater and systematic emphasis on longer-term counter-terrorism considerations. Short term counter-terrorist elements such as steadily increasing regional state capacity to interdict the circulation of militants, funds and weapons, must be judiciously meshed with longer term counter-terrorism measures aimed at ameliorating the political and socioeconomic sources of regional Muslim discontent, promoting moderate Islam or a "realistic fundamentalism", and cutting out the political oxygen that fuels the anti-American sentiment animating radical Islamist ideology. Only then will JI's functional and political space, the wider problem of rejectionist Islam, and the prospect of further "Balis", be steadily and inexorably diminished.

Notes

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VI. *The Indonesia Factor*

Chapter 15

Indonesia and the Challenge of Radical Islam After October 12

Rizal Sukma

Introduction

International and regional attention on the presence of radical Islamic groups in Indonesia came not only with the devastating terrorist attacks on Bali on 12 October 2002. Soon after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the subsequent American retaliation against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan, Southeast Asia immediately became a major region of concern. It was declared, for example, that "Southeast Asia will be another important front in this war".[1] Elsewhere it was similarly argued that "one frontier in the next round [in the fight against global terrorism] will likely be Southeast Asia".[2] Such concerns initially arose after a string of arrests made by Singaporean, Malaysian, and Philippine authorities of a number of Islamic militants linked to a shadowy organisation called Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). The confessions by several detainees in Singapore, and particularly in the Philippines, provide some indications that a regional terrorist network does in fact exist in the region.

A stronger, more convincing and devastating "evidence" of the terrorist threat in Southeast Asia in general, and in Indonesia in particular, came with

the horrific attacks on Bali on October 12. With ever more concrete evidence mounting daily, the threat of terrorism in the country has been seen to be more real than what many Indonesian leaders were initially prepared to admit. Despite earlier denials by Indonesian officials, especially by Vice-President Hamzah Haz, the Bali bombing clearly exposed the vulnerability of Indonesia to major terrorist attacks. More importantly, the results of the investigation have so far indicated the existence of JI in Indonesia. Ever since the perpetrators of the Bali bombing clearly justified their evil acts in religious terms, a number of questions regarding Indonesia's Islam are now being asked within and outside the country. To what extent does radical Islam in Indonesia pose a serious threat to the country and the region? Will Indonesia become a hotbed for terrorist organisations due to the presence of radical groups? Could Indonesia's tolerant brand of Islam give way to militant fundamentalism following October 12? How vulnerable is Indonesia to the challenge of religious extremism? Can Indonesia tame the growing radicalism within the emerging democratic order, or will it have to revert to authoritarian means to cope with such challenges?

This essay discusses the challenge of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia, especially after the Bali bombing. The discussion is divided into four sections. The first section examines the rise of Islamic radicalism within the context of the historical legacy of Suharto's authoritarianism, democratic transition in post-Suharto era, the agenda of the radicals themselves, and the impact of crisis. The second section assesses the challenge posed by radical Islam to the nature of Indonesia as a non-theocratic state in general, and to the mainstream Islamic community in particular. The third section specifically discusses the prospects of Islamic radicalism in the context of the Bali bombing and the progress of the investigation. Finally, the concluding section touches upon the importance of economic recovery and democracy as the mechanisms by which the rise of radicalism within the Muslim community can be managed.

The Political Context of Radicalism: State Repression, Crisis and the Problem of State Authority

The problem of Islamic radicalism is certainly not new in Indonesia's history and politics. In 1950s, for example, a political movement called *Darul Islam/Tentera Islam Indonesia* (DI/TII) took up arms in an attempt to transform Indonesia into an Islamic state. The government forces, however, managed to put down the DI/TII rebellion, that occurred in the provinces of West Java, Aceh, and South Sulawesi. At the height of the New Order regime's

authoritarian control in the late 1970s and early 1980s, radical Islamic groups, in a much smaller scale than the DI/TII, once again re-emerged and tried to challenge the regime. These attempts, however, "did not stand a chance in the face of the state repression".[3] Indeed, in dealing with such challenges to its rule, the New Order government did not hesitate to resort to force, often causing the loss of hundreds of lives. The worst example of the heavy-handed approach adopted by the New Order government towards such challenges occurred in 1984, when hundreds of Muslim protesters were fired upon by the military. Many Muslim activists were radicalised and went underground. For almost two decades after the mid-1980s, the phenomenon of radical Islam never resurfaced. In that context, it is interesting to ask why such a phenomenon has re-emerged in the post-Suharto era.

By-products of authoritarianism

Indeed, the current resurgence of radicalism within the Muslim community cannot be understood fully without taking into account New Order policies towards political Islam. Islam had never been allowed to play a pre-eminent role in politics and policy-making. Except in the later years of Suharto's authoritarian rule, the state had always been suspicious of the notion of Islam as a political force. For Suharto, and for Sukarno before him, it was held that politics should be "neutralised" from religion. On the other hand, many within the Muslim community contended that Islam was entitled to play a role in politics and policy-making. During the greater part of the military-backed New Order period, however, Islam was never allowed to express itself as a formal political force. Within that context, it has been asserted that, "in Indonesia, Islam is an active minority — within a numerical majority — inside a pluralistic society under an authoritarian government engaged in secular development".[4] Not surprisingly, most of Suharto's New Order period was marked by tension between the state and Islam.

Political Islam became subject to the process of marginalisation, and the strength of Islam as a political force was reduced greatly due to a number of measures undertaken by the New Order government. The first of such measures was the New Order's policy to "regularise" Indonesia's party system. The New Order regime strongly believed that the failure of the pre-1965 governments to attain stability was caused by party politics. In the eyes of military leaders, political parties were concerned more with their narrow interests than with the interests of the whole nation. Therefore, the military held that for stability to be established, it needed "to regularise" a post-1965 Indonesian

society imbued with a strong sense of political participation inherited from the Sukarno era. The New Order government expressed its desire to "simplify" (*menyederhanakan*) the party system by limiting the number of political parties to two and one "functional group" (GOLKAR) as its own electoral machine.

This task of "simplifying the party system" was completed in January 1973 when political parties were forced to merge into two-newly created parties, the United Development Party (PPP) and the Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI).[5] The most controversial measure taken by the New Order regime was its demand that all mass-based organisations in Indonesia, especially the political parties, accepted Pancasila as their sole philosophical foundation (*asas tunggal*).[6] This policy prevented the PPP from proclaiming itself as an Islamic party and put paid to any future hope for the emergence of Islamic-based political parties. Indeed, the subsequent introduction of a new bill on Political Parties and Golkar in 1985, which restricted party activity and the number of political parties, further weakened the ability of political organisations to act independently of state control. As a result, the government effectively confined political parties to subordinate roles in the political affairs of the nation.[7] As was the case with other political forces and mass organisations, political Islam also suffered and lost its independence as a potent political force. Muslim groups were convinced that the policy was primarily meant to curb the role of Islam in Indonesia's society and politics.

The fall of President Suharto in May 1998 opened up new opportunities for Islam to once again come to the centre stage of national political life. Due to the ability of Islamic organisations such as Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) to survive Suharto's policy of marginalising Islam from politics by shifting their focus to religious and social activities, the grass-roots basis of these organisations remains strong. Moreover, Suharto never succeeded in curbing a sense of entitlement among the Muslim community to their right to play a formal political role and express their political aspirations. The process of Islamic revival, which began in the later years of Suharto's rule, has now manifested itself as a real political force. Islam finally managed to create a public space within which its entitlement to play a formal political role can be fulfilled and its political aspirations expressed.

Indeed, soon after President Suharto's resignation, the political aspirations of Islamic groups were manifested in the strong desire to participate in politics both in formal and informal forms. In a formal sense, out of 48 political parties eligible to compete in the June 1999 general elections, for example, many either adopted Islam as their ideological basis or relied on the

Muslim community as the primary basis for electoral support. In an informal sense, dozens of new Islamic organisations were formed. These new organisations, despite their claim as non-political in nature, began to influence the political discourse at national and regional levels through a number of agendas, aspirations, and actions. Their aspirations and voices, often expressed in high profile ways and through street demonstrations, began to be heard. Their actions, especially those manifested in acts of destroying cafes and bars, began to catch media attention, both domestically and internationally. When a group called Laskar Jihad began to be involved in violent religious conflict in Maluku, the resurgence of radical Islam in Indonesia became a source of regional and international anxiety. That anxiety grew stronger in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attack in the United States, especially when hundreds of Muslims staged daily protests in the streets of Jakarta and other major cities against the subsequent American military campaign in Afghanistan.

Agenda, crisis and the problem of state authority

The above discussion on the authoritarian context, and the introduction of democracy, only explains the emergence and the establishment of hard line Islamic groups, but not why these groups have resorted to militant modes of actions — which in some cases tend toward violence — in expressing their aspirations and in carrying out their activities. More specifically, it does not sufficiently answer the question why such radical groups — despite the introduction of a more democratic political system — continue to carry out some activities that pose a challenge not only to the authority of the state but also to the existing political arrangements based on a non-theocratic form of the state and society. This requires an understanding of the second context of the resurgence of Islamic radicalism, namely the agenda of these groups on the one hand, and the attendant impact of the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis on both state authority and social and economic life on the other.

In terms of its agenda, the radicals demand a quick and dramatic change in social, political, and economic life of the country. They believe that Islam provides an answer to the current crisis, and the implementation of Islamic *shariah* would serve as the first step towards that direction. For these groups, Islam should be observed in its totality (*kaffah*), not through partial and selective imposition.[8] Islam is also seen as a belief system that includes all aspects of life and should become the only source of guidance for both the society and the state. In this perspective, Islam does not recognise the separation of state and religion. In fact, it is believed that Islam should serve not only as the

ideological basis of the state but also as the core element of state identity. By implication, this line of interpretation strongly believes that the establishment of an Islamic state (*Daulah Islamiyah*) based on the sovereignty of God becomes imperative. They argue that it is only through an Islamic state that the ideals of Islam can be realised on the face of the earth. And, in such system, democracy is generally seen as incompatible with Islam.[9]

In a more practical sense, the emergence of radical Islam is meant to achieve at least four agendas.[10] First, radical Islam serves as a vehicle that puts pressure on the state to recognise and adopt the Jakarta Charter. It is believed that the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter would provide a constitutional basis for Indonesian Muslims to observe the *shariah* law. Second, radical Islam strives to eradicate vices and social ills in the society. In that context, raids on, and the destruction of café's, karaoke bars, gambling houses, and brothels by the Front Pembela Islam (FPI) is meant to eradicate vices and social ills in the society. These activities reflect the radical Islamic agenda of creating a society free from unIslamic elements. Third, radical Islam also emerges as a response to social and political injustice,[11] especially in conflict areas. It becomes a response to what radical Muslims perceive as ongoing oppression of Muslims by the state and other forces. Finally, forging a worldwide solidarity among the Islamic *ummah* is also high on the agenda of radical Islam. This agenda is, among others, shown through a periodic display of support for the plight of the Palestinians and opposition to US foreign policy towards the Muslim world.

The radicals initially expected that post-Suharto Indonesia would become more receptive to such agendas. However, they have realised that Indonesia in the post-1997–1998 crisis era is nowhere near achieving those agendas. The new Islamic groups do not see that the situation has changed significantly in the post-Suharto era. In fact, many argue that the situation has even worsened from the previous one. The demands that the Jakarta Charter be included in the 1945 Constitution have been repeatedly rejected. Social ills and problems continue unabated and without significant measures being taken by the government to address them. Even members of the security apparatus are often involved in, for example, the selling of drugs and other criminal activities. While communal conflicts in Maluku and Poso have subsided, the overall situation remains volatile. And the policies and position of the government towards issues in the Muslim world, especially towards the US, is heavily criticised as being weak at best and indifferent at worst. Indeed, the deterioration of economic, social and political conditions in Indonesia after the 1997/1998 crisis have produced an environment favourable to the

activities of radical groups. And, central to this problem is the weakness of state authority in the post-Suharto era.

Radicalism and Indonesia's Islam: How Vulnerable is Indonesia?

It was mentioned earlier that regional and international focus on the resurgence of radical Islamic groups in Indonesia grew stronger after September 11. Western media and analysts began to talk about the possibility of Indonesia turning into a fertile ground for radicalism and a safe haven for terrorists. Commenting on the situation in Indonesia, for example, an American official believed that the local groups "have created a very conducive host environment for foreign terrorists".[12] It was also predicted that, "in the longer term, though, Islamic radicalism could damage Indonesia's stability and national cohesion".[13] All these observations clearly suggest a growing fear outside Indonesia that the country is really vulnerable to the challenge posed by radical Islamic groups. By implication, there are also worries that the rise of radical groups will increase Indonesia's susceptibility to terrorist attacks.

How vulnerable is Indonesia to the challenge of Islamic radicalism? While no one doubts the threat of terrorism in Indonesia, the answer to this question requires one qualification: radicalism is not to be equated with terrorism. As Syafii Maarif of Muhammadiyah has made it clear, radicalism "refers to a set of attitudes and ways to express [a political belief], the latter [i.e., terrorism] clearly embraces criminal acts for political purposes".[14] He also sees radicalism as "an intra-religious problem that should be dealt with by the Muslim community itself".[15] Using this distinction, the following arguments only address the challenge of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia, not that of terrorism. While there are many reasons to believe that Indonesia will be able to withstand the challenge of radicalism, it is not immediately clear whether the country has the capacity to counter the threat of terrorism.

Indeed, there are a number of reasons to believe that Indonesia remains resilient to the challenge of radical Islamic groups.[16] First, the radical groups constitute only a tiny percentage within the Muslim community in Indonesia. While some might find this argument a cliché, it nonetheless needs to be emphasised again and again. This, among other things, can be seen from the low degree of public support for the agenda of radical Islam, and even fewer advocate violence as an acceptable method to achieve that agenda. Even those who support the agenda of *shariah* through the constitutional means

remain a minority group. The share garnered by three pro-*shariah* parties in the 1999 general elections — the PPP, PBB, and Partai Keadilan (PK) — was only 11 percent, two percent and one percent of the total vote cast respectively. Meanwhile, the votes of other smaller Islamic parties combined together only reached around one percent. In total, Islamic parties garnered a vote of only 15 percent; a tiny minority in a country of 220 million people. Indeed, the results of the 1999 elections, according to Barton, "strongly suggest that very few Indonesians are attracted to Islamism, much less radicalism".[17]

Second, key leaders of two mainstream Islamic organisations — NU and Muhammadiyah — are opposed to the inclusion of the Jakarta Charter in the 1945 Constitution, which in effect would oblige Indonesian Muslims to observe the *shariah* law. When some Islamic parties demanded an amendment to Article 29 of the 1945 Constitution, leaders of Muhammadiyah and NU rejected the idea.[18] Even those members of Muhammadiyah and NU who support the introduction of *shariah* in Indonesia, and therefore disagree with the official position of their respective organisations on this issue, do not contemplate implementing the *shariah* in a violent way. Instead, they opt for an Islamic political party that supports the aspiration. For example, even though the PKB is meant for NU constituencies, and PAN to a certain degree for Muhammadiyah, the main support for the PPP generally comes from members of both Muhammadiyah and NU. In other words, those who support the implementation of *shariah* law should not be too readily categorised as "radical". Moreover, the fact that they choose a peaceful constitutional way to channel their aspirations should really make them "moderates".

Third, the scant possibility of Indonesia's Islam embracing radicalism is also supported by the fact that the majority of Muslims in the country embrace an ideal of democracy not much different from elsewhere. The majority of Muslims, for example, do not see Islam as contradictory to the idea of democracy. Key Muslim leaders, such as Amien Rais and Syafii Maarif of Muhammadiyah, have been at the forefront of the democratisation process in Indonesia. American democracy and political process, with some qualifications, remains a source of inspiration for these leaders. They argue that while it might be imperfect, some elements of American democracy might be useful for the Indonesian democratisation process. For example, the position of Amien Rais on the issue of direct presidential elections, as well as his proposal that presidential candidates should engage in a public debate, are inspired by similar processes in the US.[19] Amien encourages Indonesia "to learn from the most advanced democracies such as the United States".[20] Amien also admires the West for its commitment to eradicate corruption.[21] In that context, Amien believes that

"Islam [in Indonesia] is in fact capable of eradicating the seeds of radicalism and of creating an environment free from radicalism".[22]

Fourth, the regional and international fear of radical Islam in Indonesia, as mentioned earlier, is largely caused by the involvement of Laskar Jihad in sectarian conflicts in Maluku and Poso. However, one should remember that Laskar Jihad is not the only reason for the prolonged sectarian conflict in Indonesia. There have been reports that elements of the military also played a significant role in sustaining and worsening the conflict. In Maluku, for example, there have been reports about the complicity of military and police officers in the conflict.[23] It has been noted, for example, that "the ease" with which Laskar Jihad "assembled men and arms gives weight to the belief that some figures in the military or political establishment are supporting it".[24] In other words, the causes of conflicts in Maluku and Poso also have their own local origins, both economic and political.[25] This suggests that sectarian conflicts in Indonesia should not be taken as evidence for a widespread influence and national outreach of radical groups in the country.

Fifth, the growth of radical discourse is not without competitors. Nor is it the only ongoing development within the Muslim community. Even though still small and elitist in nature, there is a "counter-movement" from within the Muslim community. A group of young Muslim thinkers grouped under the Liberal Islam Network (Jaringan Islam Liberal — JIL) has been actively engaged in the promotion of a tolerant, moderate, and pluralistic view of Islam. Indeed, there is some sort of discursive contest between JIL and the radical groups, and even though both groups claim to represent mainstream sentiments, they both expect to influence the somewhat "neutral" majority.[26] In fact, this "neutral" majority belongs to either Muhammadiyah or NU; two mainstream Muslim organisations renowned for their moderation. Interestingly, many young Muslim intellectuals associated with "liberal" thinking are at the same time also active members and activists of either NU or Muhammadiyah.

Sixth, the phenomenon of Islamic radicalism is still limited in its scope and outreach. With South Sulawesi as an exception, this phenomenon is largely Java-based and urban-centred. Its presence is highly visible only in the cities of Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Solo. Radical Islam remains a non-issue outside Java, including in areas where Islam maintains a strong presence, such as in Aceh and West Sumatra. In Aceh, for example, Laskar Jihad abandoned its attempt to establish a presence, possibly due to lack of support from the local community and the opposition from the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). Overall, a narrow interpretation of Islam, let alone a radical one, finds little resonance among

the majority of Indonesian Muslims. While there has been a greater tendency towards observance of Islam among the population, especially in major cities, that signifies growing personal piety rather than growing radicalism. Indeed, as noted by Angel Rabasa of RAND, "Indonesia has not proved to be fertile soil for Wahhabism."[27]

Finally, the rise of radicalism can also be seen as a by-product of the opening up of the political system and the messy democratic transition the country is still undergoing. In that context, the presence of radical groups should be seen as the inevitable part of the fragile democratisation process in Indonesia. Indeed, the birth of new Islamic groups such as Laskar Jihad "needs to be seen as a product of its times in Indonesia rather than as a mere reflection of events in the Middle East or Afghanistan".[28] However, there should be limits to which this phenomenon can be tolerated as symptomatic of the ongoing democratisation process. Radicalism would become unacceptable if it breeds two enemies of democracy: the threat or use of violence and the intention to destroy the space for difference in opinion and freedom of thought. Here, the role of the state as an honest arbiter and the guardian of the social order is critical.

Developments After Bali: Has the Picture Changed?

The arguments presented above may seem at face value to have lost their validity in the face of the Bali bombing on 12 October 2002. Indeed, since the Bali attack, there has been renewed worry and anxiety about Islamic radicalism in Indonesia. Many see the Bali bombing as solid proof of the real threat posed by Islamic radicalism. While it might be correct to say that the Bali bombing revealed Indonesia's susceptibility to terrorist attacks, it does not follow that the country's moderates are losing ground to the radicals and that Indonesia would soon become a Muslim country dominated by a radical Islamic agenda. As Sidney Jones has argued, "The threat of terrorism [in Indonesia] is real, yet only a few Muslims are radicals, and even fewer advocate violence."[29] Indeed, without discounting the seriousness of the terrorist threats in Indonesia, the Bali case should be put and assessed in a wider and proper context.

First, as the ongoing investigation has revealed, the Bali attack was carried out by a group of obscure individuals rather than by well-known groups such as FPI and Laskar Jihad. Even though suspicions and allegations have also been directed towards the possible involvement of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia — MMI), especially its leader Abu Bakar Bashir, the investigation has not found any direct and concrete evidence linking him or his organisation to the terrorist acts in Bali. The police,

while claiming that Bashir might have given his blessing to the Bali bombing, at the time of writing (April 2003), still refrain from naming the cleric a suspect. In other words, evidence is so far still considered circumstantial and only in the form of association, in one way or another, between the suspects and Bashir's boarding school in Ngruki, Central Java. A recent report by the respected International Crisis Group (ICG), for example, also believes that Bashir "is unlikely, however, to have been the mastermind" in a series of bombing campaigns in Indonesia.[30] A conclusive and definite answer to such allegations must await the results of the ongoing investigations in Indonesia.

Second, the Bali bombing also points to the presence of elements of international terrorism in Indonesia. Here, the possible links with Al Qaeda have been mentioned by the Indonesian authorities. The recent report by *Time* magazine based on the confession of key suspects in the Bali bombing also indicates the possible role of Al Qaeda.[31] The investigation has so far also indicated the involvement of Malaysian terrorists, primarily as the possible financiers of the attack in Bali.[32]This suggests that the terrorist group that carried out the Bali bombing does have solid and well-organised external links and an external agenda, and that externality is believed to have been mediated by the JI. Meanwhile, despite all the publicity and the flurry of interest in the media about radical groups such as Laskar Jihad and FPI, the motives and actions of these groups remain anchored in domestic politics.[33] Suggestions that these groups have maintained close "links" with Al Qaeda remain elusive and inconclusive. It should be noted, however, the case of MMI led by Bashir remains open to investigation.

Third, and more importantly, the Bali bombing — especially in relation to the possible involvement of international elements — is also related to the capacity of Indonesia in coping with the threat of terrorism in general. In this regard, there are four factors that should receive greater attention. The first is policy weaknesses and the limited capacity of Indonesian intelligence. The second factor is Indonesia's porous borders and the limited capacity of the state to guard them. The third factor is the lack of law enforcement and the corrupt mentality of law enforcers themselves. The fourth factor is the corrupt mentality of the state bureaucracy — such as within immigration — that allows the flourishing of fraudulent documentation. The growing threat of terrorism has more to do with these four factors than with the growing appeal of the ideology of radicalism itself within the Muslim community. As long as these weaknesses are still in place, terrorism will continue to pose a grave danger not only to Indonesia but also to regional security and stability.

As the real causes behind the Bali bombing might be far more complex than just the presence of Islamic radical groups in Indonesia, it is less likely that the Bali tragedy will bring about a fundamental change regarding the problem of radicalism in Indonesia. Jones, for example, has argued that the extent or content of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia is not likely to be changed by the Bali bombing.[34] It is true that Laskar Jihad has disbanded itself in the aftermath of October 12 tragedy, but seemingly for entirely different reasons.[35] While the FPI has declared itself "frozen", other groups continue to exist. Therefore, it is not unlikely that they will once again make a come back. For example, the leader of FPI Habib Rizieq Syihab has also declared that his organisation will be re-activated. And, to a considerable degree, their return and the proliferation of similar groups will surely depend on the ability of the state to address the root causes that give birth to these groups in the first place.

Concluding Remarks: Democracy as the Answer

It has been argued earlier that the problem is not Islam, but instability and socioeconomic crisis, and the absence of state authority in dealing with it. Indeed, the emergence of many radical Islamic groups in Indonesia is better understood within the context of grievances directed against the oppressive state policy during the New Order period, against social and economic problems, and against the perceived and actual injustice in the society. In this context, many of these groups are the product of decades of bad governance, the absence of democracy, and act as domestic rather than international players. Indeed, a perceptive scholar has aptly stated that, "dealing with [militant groups] intellectually is the task for moderate Muslims".[36] If such groups resort to violence in expressing their demands, the problem should be dealt with through the instrument of law enforcement, rather than through the use of military might.

Despite the presence of all the factors that serve as barriers and ballast against growing radicalism within Indonesia's society, however, the possibility for an increase in the number of people attracted to and sympathising with the ideology and worldview of radical Islam should not be discounted entirely. There are two significant factors that might accelerate that process. First, the radical appeal would increase if the state fails to spark a speedy economic recovery. The second is the failure of the country to consolidate the process of democratisation. Indeed, it has been acknowledged even outside Indonesia that the real threat to Indonesia "lies not in Indonesian Islam and Islamic politics, but in continued economic fragility, lawlessness and inadequate law

enforcement, on-going corruption, badly managed decentralisation, inattention to past abuses and inequalities, an unresponsive power-focused political elite, and the incapacity or unwillingness of armed services and police to deal with lawlessness and internal conflicts while respecting fundamental human rights".[37]

The international community also constitutes a factor that can complicate the picture. There is a tendency, especially amongst international policy makers and analysts, to ignore the importance of making distinctions when they talk about "Islamic radicalism" or "extremism" in Indonesia. It is critical to make a distinction between violent and non-violent radical groups. Within a democratic Indonesia, expressing one's view in a radical but non-violent way — such as public demonstrations — is common, if not quite "acceptable", political behaviour. This mode of political expression is also commonly used by left-leaning radical groups. It has been pointed out correctly by an American journalism professor that "without making a distinction you drive all of these [Muslim] groups to be more radicalised, to be more extremist because they thought that you are attacking the practice of their religion by accusing all of them of being terrorists".[38]

The failure of the Indonesian state to address the challenges mentioned above would cultivate a deep distrust in the merits of the current non-theocratic political and economic system. Islam as conceived by radical groups will soon be seen as an alternative remedy to the current social, economic, and political ills plaguing the nation. In that context, the ideology and worldview of radical Islam might enjoy greater appeal among the frustrated population. Moreover, the failure of the state to address those issues could also lead to the return of military into politics. Given the Indonesian military's (TNI) attitude towards religious politics in the past, such a scenario might reduce the proliferation of radicalism in the society at the expense of democracy. And, Indonesia would certainly go back to square one: a diverse country governed by an oppressive military-backed authoritarian regime. If that is the case, one should not be surprised if some time in a not too distant future, the same issue of the resurgence of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia would once again become a subject of debate.

As Sidney Jones has put it, that scenario can be prevented "not merely by cracking down on radical Muslims, but by providing alternatives to the way of life they offer".[39] That alternative clearly requires the ability to make democracy work — something that Indonesia currently still lacks. The growth of radicalism can be checked if Indonesia manages to accelerate the economic recovery and establish a solid democracy, based on the rule of law,

that guarantees freedom for every citizen. Oppression is not the answer to radicalism, and will only lead to more radicalism. The experience during more than three decades of New Order rule has clearly demonstrated this. Despite all the difficulties and challenges the country is currently facing, no Indonesian would want to repeat the history of New Order authoritarianism where personal and communal rights were curbed in the name of *stabilitas* (stability) and *pembangunan* (development). While both elements of this New Order ideology remain imperative, the process by which they are achieved is equally important.

Notes

1. Dana R. Dillon and Paolo Pasicolan, "Southeast Asia and the War Against Terrorism", *The Heritage Foundation's Backgrounder*, No. 1496, 23 October 2001, p. 1.
2. Catherine E. Dalpino, "Southeast Asia: A Second Front", *Knight Rider Newspapers*, 21 December 2001, available at <Taiwan News.com>, accessed on 21 February 2002.
3. Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamic Radicalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State", *ISIM Newsletter*, 16 April 2001, available at <www.isim.nl/newsletter/7/regional/1.html>.
4. Quoted in Jalaluddin Rakhmat, "Islam di Indonesia: Masalah Definisi" (Islam in Indonesia: The Problem of Definition), in M. Amien Rais, ed., *Islam di Indonesia: Suatu Ikhtiar Mengaca Diri* (Islam in Indonesia: An Attempt at Self-Reflection) (Jakarta: Rajawali, 1986), p. 41.
5. The PPP comprised four Muslim parties; Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia (PSII), Partai Muslimin Indonesia (Parmusi), and Pergerakan Tarbiyah Islamiah (PERTI). The PDI consisted of the secular-nationalist Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), Murba, Ikatan Pendukung Kemerdekaan Indonesia (IPKI), together with the Christian Partai Kristen Indonesia (Parkindo), and Partai Katolik (Catholic Party).
6. For a comprehensive account of the introduction of Pancasila as the sole ideology in the New Order era, see Douglas Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia*: *Democracy, Islam and the Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).
7. For a brief discussion of the New Order's initial attempt at limiting the role and influence of political parties, see Robert Cribb and Colin Brown, *Modern Indonesia: A History Since 1945* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 120–128.
8. Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal: Perulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras di Indonesia* (Radical Islam: The Struggle of Hard-Line Islamic Organisations in Indonesia) (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), p. 12.
9. Zada, *Islam Radikal*, p. 132.

10. Zada, *Islam Radikal*, p. 161.
11. "Gerakan Islam Radikal Bukan Ancaman", *Bulletin Laskar Jihad*, 14th edition, 2001, p. 9.
12. Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "Al Qaeda Feared To Be Lurking in Indonesia", *The Washington Post*, 11 January 2002.
13. Tim Huxley, *Disintegrating Indonesia?: Implications for Regional Security*, Adelphi Paper No. 349 (London: IISS, 2002), p. 68.
14. Ahmad Syafii Maarif, "Islam and the Challenge of Managing Globalisation", paper presented at *Trilateral Commission Task Force Meeting on Islam and Globalisation*, Washington DC, 6–7 April 2002.
15. Maarif, "Islam and the Challenge of Managing Globalisation".
16. Azyumardi Azra has also provided excellent analysis on this issue. See, his "Fundamentalisme Partai Islam" (The Fundamentalism of Islamic Parties) in Hamid Basyaib and Hamid Abidin, eds., *Mengapa Partai Islam Kalah?* (Why Did Islamic Parties Lose?) (Jakarta: Alvabet, 2000).
17. Greg Barton, "Islamism and Indonesia: Islam and the Contest for Power After Suharto", *The Review*, September 2002, available at <www.aijac.org.au/review/2002/279/islam-indon.html>, accessed 16 April 2003.
18. Islamic parties demanded that Article 29, which currently says that "Indonesia is based on God", be amended to include "with the obligation for the Muslims to observe *shariah* law". The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR), during its Annual Session in August 2002, rejected the proposal.
19. See Amien Rais' statement in *Bisnis Indonesia*, 6 October 1998.
20. M. Amien Rais, "Menegakkan Kejujuran" (Upholding Honesty), *Amanat Nasional*, 5 February 1999, p. 3.
21. In a televised debate with Golkar's Chairman Akbar Tandjung, Amien pointed to Italy as a good example on how a government managed to eradicate the widespread practice of corruption. "Pro and Kon", *Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia* (TPI), 14 January 1998, 21.30–22.30, Indonesian Western Time.
22. Amien Rais, *Cakrawala Islam: Antara Cita dan Fakta* (Islamic Horizon: Between Ideals and Fact) (Bandung: Mizan, 1987), p. 136.
23. *The Jakarta Post*, 9 January 2003.
24. Diarmid O'Sullivan, "Indonesia: Radicals Have Homegrown Causes," *The International Herald Tribune*, 26 December 2001.
25. See, for example, Lorraine V. Aragon, "Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People", *Indonesia*, Vol. 72 (October 2001), pp. 45–80, and "Human Rights Watch", *Communal Violence in West Kalimantan*, 1997, available at <www.hrw.org/reports/1997/wkali/Brneo97d-02.htm>, accessed 16 April 2003.
26. See Barton, "Islamism and Indonesia".
27. Angel M. Rabasa, "Moderates, Radicals and Terrorists: Political Islam in Southeast Asia", unpublished manuscript, September 2002, p. 3.

28. O'Sullivan, "Indonesia: Radicals Have Homegrown Causes".
29. Sidney Jones, "Indonesia: The Fear Factor", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Internet edition, November 2002, available at <www.mondediplo.com/2002/11/04indonesia>, accessed on 19 January 2003.
30. ICG, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates", Asia Report No. 43, 11 December 2002, p. 4.
31. See, "The Jihadis' Tale", *Time*, 27 January 2003, pp. 16–20.
32. Rory Callinan and Jim Dickins, "Al Qaeda Cash Link to Bali Suspects", *Herald Sun*, 7 December 2002, available at <www.heraldsun.news.com.au/printpage/0,5481,5631381,00.html>, accessed 16 April 2003.
33. See, for example, Christopher Dagg, "Religion and Politics in Indonesia", paper presented at Canadian Consortium on Asia-Pacific Security (CANCAPS) 9th Annual Conference, University of British Columbia, 7–9 December 2001, pp. 3–4; Kirsten E. Schulze, "Militants and Moderates", *The World Today*, January 2002, p. 12; and Donald K. Emmerson, "Southeast Asia and the United States Since 11 September", statement prepared for a hearing on "Southeast Asia After 9/11: Regional Trends and US Interests" organised by the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives, Washington DC, 12 December 2001, p. 5; and Kirsten E. Schulze, "Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon", *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. IX, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 57–70.
34. Jones, "Indonesia: The Fear Factor".
35. See, ICG, "Impact of the Bali Bombings", *Indonesia Briefing*, 24 October 2002.
36. Kirsten E. Schulze, "Militants and Moderates", p. 10.
37. Dagg, "Religion and Politics in Indonesia", p. 5.
38. Calvin Simms, quoted in Nikola Krastev, "Indonesia: Radical Muslim Groups Elude Easy Classification", *Radio Free Europe*, Internet edition, available at <www.rfel.org/nca/features/2002/10/17102002161557.asp>.
39. Jones, "Indonesia: The Fear Factor".

Chapter 16

The Indonesian Dilemma: How to Participate in the War on Terror Without Becoming a National Security State

Leonard C. Sebastian

Introduction

Throughout the Suharto era, an omnipresent, all-encompassing, and intrusive security structure undergirded the state, enabling the formidable coercive powers of the security agencies to be unleased against possible sources of domestic opposition, be it proponents of a separatist agenda, pro-democracy groups, opposition politicians, human rights activists or radical Islamists. The operative term used to describe such disturbances was the acronym SARA, referring to a range of security concerns to cover the brief of internal security operations relating to ethnicity (*suku*), religion (*agama*), race (*ras*), and conflict among interest-based groups (*Antar-Golongan*) with the potential to compromise the security of the state.

The strong democratic fervour that accompanied the demise of the Suharto regime in 1998 heavily constrained the security structure that for over three decades had maintained Indonesia's stability. The all-encompassing emergency powers that the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) had granted Suharto in the last days of his regime were abolished. The military's social and political functions under the *Dwifungsi* were reined in. Domestic intelligence

agencies also found their formidable powers and capability curtailed through political intrusion, inter-agency rivalry, lack of funding and the emergence of more accountability structures aimed at preventing arbitrary arrest and human rights violations.

The Bali tragedy of 12 October 2002 that left 202 people dead should not be viewed in isolation. Not counting the numerous bombings that have occurred in Maluku and South Sulawesi, between April 1999 and October 2002, nearly fifty bomb attacks were attributed to the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI).[1] Perhaps what was most interesting in the aftermath of the Bali bombings was not so much the scale of the tragedy, or the fact that such an event was unexpected, but that after months of denying that Indonesia had become a "haven" for terrorists, Jakarta was forced to concede that initial post-Bali investigations demonstrated a connection between the JI and the international terrorist network of Al Qaeda with its broader anti-West agenda.

Why the reluctance by Indonesia to take seriously the threat posed by the JI despite the significant evidence provided the governments of Malaysia and Singapore? Perceptions are a significant factor. First, JI is a generic term referring to any congregation of the devout and it is commonplace in many cities in Indonesia. Second, Indonesia is burdened by a legacy of manipulation and violent suppression of Muslims. As a consequence both Muslims and non-Muslims feel the need to tread carefully when following up accusations. Third, public trust in the competence and reliability of the security agencies is at an all time low. As JI is a secretive organisation, it is likely that most of the information conveyed would be through intelligence channels. Specifically how the intelligence apparatus in Indonesia would use information provided by foreign intelligence agencies was a source of concern by the public. Such concerns were understandable in view of the dreadful record of the intimidation, harassment, and in instances deliberate engineering of information by the intelligence apparatus in support of the political interests of the Suharto regime.[2] Hence, it was not surprising to note that in the aftermath of the Bali blasts, the country was rife with conspiracy theories, some far fetched, but nevertheless, taken seriously by a significant proportion of the population.[3]

Indonesia is at a crucial crossroads. In the war against terrorism, concerns exist over what security mechanisms the Megawati Administration restore that, while attempting to negate terrorism could inadvertently be used broadly against political opponents. Will there be a temptation for a return to the old security structures at the expense of hard fought democratic reforms? Or will the more open democratic environment effectively constrain Indonesia's security services from addressing terrorism optimally? These are some of

the questions this essay will attempt to address in assessing the adequacy of the Indonesian response to the threat posed by terrorist networks based in Indonesia. The approach is straightforward. First, the essay assesses the background to the current security concerns facing Indonesia; second, it looks at the anti-terrorist legislation promulgated to deal with terrorist-related issues; and third, it examines the role of the security agencies in dealing with terrorism.

Nexus Between Local Islamic Militancy and Transnational Terrorism

A strong *pemuda*[4] culture has permeated through Indonesian youth organizations since the *Revolusi* (Revolution) where a variety of Islamic militia fought on the side of the young republic to secure its independence in the late 1940s. Militia groups and student groups have always pointed to this *pemuda* tradition as a source of legitimacy. Militancy has existed in Indonesia's post-independence history. This manifested itself through the Darul Islam revolt that posed a significant threat to the survival of the state in the 1950s. While the movement was effectively nullified by 1962, sporadic acts of terrorism often related to the remnants of the Darul Islam occurred during the New Order era, the most prominent being the bomb blasts at the Borobudur temple complex in the late 1970s and the hijacking of a Garuda airlines flight in 1981.[5]

Accurate intelligence and effective government countermeasures resulted in the break-up of such militant groups as a number of its leaders went to jail and others like Abu Bakar Bashir went into exile in Malaysia. During the Habibie presidency, a number of Islamic militants were released from prison while those in exile like Bashir returned to continue their struggle utilising the wider socio-political space accorded to them by *reformasi*. The JI's aims and its integration within Indonesia's Islamic mainstream were further legitimised through the founding of the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI, Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia) in 2000. Using the MMI as a front, Bashir was able to extend the JI network by reaching out to other Muslim groups and political organizations particularly those working for the implementation of the *shariah*.

JI and Al Qaeda interests intersected at various levels. The linkage with JI gave the Al Qaeda a new theatre of operations, safe houses for their operatives and a new supply of recruits. For the JI, Al Qaeda provided material benefits in the form of funds and weapons along with a more expanded vision, whereby

the Southeast Asian group fused its struggle for Islam in the region with Al Qaeda's global struggle against the West in general and the US in particular. Such an outlook allowed the JI to present itself as the defender of Islam for all Indonesians particularly in situations where a vulnerable Megawati had to succumb to US pressure to be seen to doing more in the war against terror.

The JI may be the best-known group but it is not the only radical Islamist group with militant tendencies. The Makassar-based Committee for the Implementation of Islamic Law (KPSI, Komite Pengerakan Syariat Islam)[6] has its own paramilitary security team known as the Laskar Jundullah (The Army of God). The Laskar Jundullah is essentially an umbrella organisation for the various *anti-maksiat* or *anti kejahatan* (anti-immorality or anti-crime) groups that are all male vigilante/paramilitary bands usually armed with sticks and machetes. Since 1999, such groups have grown in alarming numbers in the interior areas of South Sulawesi.[7]

The police claim that some of the Laskar Jundullah members have links to the Bali bombers. This group is also alleged to have played a role in the bombing, on 5 December 2002, of a McDonalds outlet and a Haji Kalla car dealership both owned by a member of Megawati's cabinet in Makassar. Similar to the Laskar Jihad and the Front Pembela Islam militia, the Laskar Jundullah attempts to enforce "proper" Islamic behaviour by raiding night-clubs, karaoke bars and other places of "decadence". In March 2002, its leader, Agus Dwikarna, also prominent in the MMI, was arrested in the Philippines and convicted on charges relating to the possession of explosives and subsequently sentenced to 17 years in prison. Coincidentally, the KPSI's executive committee is headed by Aziz Kahar Muzakar, son of Kahar Muzakar who led the South Sulawesi branch of the Indonesian Islamic Army (TII, Tentera Islam Indonesia).

It is difficult to gauge the appeal and significance of such groups within the wider context of Islam in Indonesia. Muslims constitute 88 percent of Indonesia's 231 million people but the vast majority are not driven by a radical agenda. The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia, are generally characterised as moderate. Likewise, the four political parties with an exclusivist demand for an Islamic state won a paltry five percent of the vote in the 1999 general election. However, unlike the restrained Suharto era, Indonesian Muslims are more responsive to appeals of global Islamic grievances such as the Palestinian cause or how American policy and rhetoric in the Middle East could be perceived as slights against Islam. Mainstream Muslim leaders representing the "establishment" like Nurcholish Madjid, Syafii Maarif and Hasyim Muzadi stress the need for

the government to be restrained in their actions against militant groups for fear that a heavy-handed approach may result in greater radicalisation.

However, the success of organisations such as the MMI, Laskar Jihad, Front Pembela Islam and KPSI in utilising the openness now characteristic of a democratising Indonesia as a facade to engage in militant activities is likely to spawn more groups, for example the Laskar Santri, Laskar Mujahidin, Kompi Badr, Taleban Brigade and the Pasukan Komando Mujahidin, or websites like the *al-Katibul Maut al-Alamiya* (International Death Brigade) with their *dakwah* (proselytisation) strategies aimed at the level of society described by Juwono Sudarsono as "street Islam".[8] In the long term, what will become painfully obvious is not the demobilisation of terrorist cells or the numbers of people arrested but the influence radical groups are able to exercise in the domain of "street Islam". Ominously, the abiding question remains whether "establishment Islam", out of political expediency, may have no option but to compromise with the programmes of radical groups.

The National Security State Revisited

The intervening period between the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 and the Bali bombings on 12 October 2002 saw increasing pressure placed on the Indonesian government to investigate and arrest alleged terrorists who were perceived to be sheltering in Indonesia. The government invariably responded by saying that in the absence of proof that a crime had been committed, it had no legal basis to act against anyone. Stressing its democratic credentials, the government reiterated that unlike Malaysia and Singapore, it was unable to use measures like preventive detention, wiretapping or investigations without a warrant. External pressure specifically from the United States resulted in the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights submitting an anti-terrorist bill to Parliament three months before the Bali blast. The proposed legislation faced strong opposition from those who feared it would be used to stifle legitimate dissent. Muslim groups opposed it for fear that it would be used against them, and not just the terrorists. Furthermore, the government had to contend with strong accusations from nationalists claiming that Megawati was a pawn of US interests. The government, in the face of such opposition, placed the matter of the anti-terrorist bill on the backburner until the Bali bomb attacks brought the issue back on the national agenda.

Almost a week after the October 12 Bali bombings rocked the credibility of the Indonesian government, it responded positively by issuing two

anti-terrorism regulations generally modelled on Canada's anti-terrorism legislation bill C-36. In view of the Bali atrocities, Indonesians can be said to have generally supported their government's initiative. However such perspectives are tempered by concerns that the authorities will abuse the regulations in the same way as the Suharto regime treated the subversion and state emergency laws before these draconian laws were scrapped in 1998. Similarly, the 1999 State Security Law issued during President Habibie's tenure to replace the repealed anti-subversion law of 1963 was never enforced due to strong public opposition. Indonesia's post-independence history does not provide a reassuring guide to its citizens that security laws would not be abused or end up strengthening the position of the military.

During the course of the 1950s the fledgling republic was threatened by a series of regional rebellions on Java, Sumatra, and Sulawesi. In that period, the only mechanism available to deal with such threats were the Dutch era "state of war" decree or the *Regeling op de Staat van Oorlog en van Beleg* commonly known as SOB. The state needed an effective legal basis on which to respond and as a first step the SOB was replaced in 1950 by new government regulations (Perpem No. 7 1950) and the Emergency laws (UU Darurat No. 8 1950). After four years, these laws were replaced by a new legislation on military powers (PP No. 55 1954) that accorded with prevailing norms. By 1957, in the context of deteriorating circumstances in Sumatra and Sulawesi, all emergency legislation on the books were withdrawn and replaced by another new law on "state of danger" (*keadaan bahaya*) and "state of war" (*keadaan perang*) (UU No. 74 1957).[9]

According to Widjajanto and Kammen, there were two reasons why the measures were adopted. First, periodic changes to the constitution made it necessary for the state to devise mechanisms ensuring that the legal status of military powers accorded with the constitution. Secondly, and more important, these legal instruments were necessary in order to bolster the state's ability to deal effectively with the regional rebellions when the authorities adopted law No. 23 on the "state of danger" (*keadaan bahaya*) in 1959. The new law demarcated three distinct conditions: civil emergency, military emergency, and state of war. As supreme commander of the armed forces, the president was empowered to declare any of these emergency conditions in all or part of the country.[10]

For the state elites in the 1950s, the enacting of such security legislation was not a straightforward process. The experiences of the revolution and the vociferous party political process that characterised the early 1950s had conditioned legislators to be wary of the legal complexities that accompanied the

initiation of any options that required the use of special military measures. New legislation, in this regard, was a necessity to provide the legal basis for enhanced military authority. The New Order adopted a completely different approach. Devoid of legitimacy, due to the manner in which it seized power and the violence that accompanied it, the Suharto regime never sought a legal basis to accommodate increased military authority or operations especially while Law No. 23 1959 referring to a "state of danger" was still in force. The Suharto regime's preoccupation was to find a mechanism that would legitimate its political status and not its use of military force. This was done first via the Executive Order of March 11, 1966 (*Supersemar*), and then in 1967 by formally appointing Suharto as president of the republic.[11] The anti-subversion law passed by Sukarno in 1963 allowed for the jailing of individuals who publicly opposed Guided Democracy was continued during the Suharto era. Under the statute any genuine opposition to the political status quo was labelled a threat to national security, and liable to imprisonment without trial. The law was carried over to the New Order era to deal with political opposition. It formed the legal basis for the detention of political prisoners (*Tapol*, *Tahanan Politik*).

New Anti-Terrorist Legislation[12]

On 6 March 2003, after three hours of heated debate, Parliament in its Plenary session passed by majority vote two Government Regulations *in lieu* of Law (*Perpu, Peraturan Pemerintah Penganti Undang Undang*), namely *Perpu* no. 1 on the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism, and *Perpu* no. 2 of 2002 on the Eradication of Criminal Acts of Terrorism in Relation to the Bomb Explosion Incident in Bali, 12 October 2002 to be enacted into Law.[13] The contentious nature of the debate ensured that there was no consensus in the House. Hence two Parliamentary factions, the Reform Faction and the United Development Party faction, staged a walkout when the decision came to a vote. A total of 220 legislators out of the 266 present voted for the enactment of the regulations. The Bali bomb attacks occurred at a time when Parliament was in a period of extended recess. Taking into account the fact that the House of Representatives (DPR) was still debating the anti-terrorism bill, President Megawati had the authority to issue government regulations *in lieu* of law during a state of emergency based on article 22 of the 1945 Constitution. While the President has the authority to issue a *Perpu* in the event the country is in a state of emergency, such legislation must be forwarded immediately to Parliament, which is empowered with the right

either to accept the Government Regulations thereby passing it into Law, or reject them. In this context, Parliament does not have the right to amend or change any of its articles. The new laws provided a legal basis for the security agencies to investigate and prevent acts of terrorism and were consistent with UN Security Council Resolution No. 1373 (2001).

From a legal perspective, the new laws (*Perpu Anti Terorisme*)[14] were considered progressive and served as an important building block in strengthening the rule of law in Indonesia. The new laws also demarcated various categories of terrorist acts; broader powers for law enforcers and intelligence agencies to take specific measures; and included a retroactive principle. The Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP) and the Criminal Code Procedures (KUHAP) do not classify and label terrorist acts and therefore give limited powers to law enforcement and intelligence agencies to take action. *Perpu* no. 1 of 2002 governs anti-terrorism measures, while Perpu no. 2 focuses specifically on the Bali terror attacks. Actually, in the current Indonesian legal system, laws cannot be applied retroactively. *Perpu* no. 2/2002 was thus an exception owing to the heinous nature of the Bali bombings. Nevertheless the regulation was also crafted in order to limit the retroactive effect specifically to the Bali tragedy.

Under the new anti-terrorism laws, terrorist acts refer to violent actions that have the capacity to create terror or a sense of insecurity among the public, result in death, compromise the public's freedom or the destruction of important infrastructure. The laws provide for the death penalty for those convicted of committing or threatening to commit acts of terrorism resulting in mass destruction and deaths. The strength of the laws is that unlike the withdrawn anti-terrorism bill, they do not define terrorism as a political crime based on political motives. In other words, the legislation is crafted to so as not to curb public freedom of expression be it through demonstration, protest or advocacy. Another plus point is the upholding of the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion, and race. Suspicions of terrorism are based on individual actions and not as a consequence of group membership. The laws also provide important protection for the rights of the suspect and the accused through the involvement of the judiciary. More important, the laws cannot be used to arrest someone who articulates different views or supports a different ideology. In short, the laws accord with the new Chapter XA of the amended Constitution, which introduced a significant proportion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into Indonesian law.

Nevertheless, a point of concern remains the ambiguity in the definition of terrorism. As it is currently structured, the definition is loose enough to be applied against Acehnese and Papuan separatists. "Terrorism" in the context

of Indonesia can encompass a "broader spectrum of enemies" as opposed to an American definition of the term particularly as the TNI's enemy is not the al Qaeda but local separatists.[15] Hence it was not surprising that as the TNI stepped up its military offensive on 19 May 2003 to once and for all, stamp out the 26-year rebellion in Aceh, Jakarta toyed with the idea of asking the United Nations to put the Free Aceh Movement (GAM, Gerakan Aceh Merdeka) separatist group on the list of terrorist groups, citing various acts of terror perpetrated by the organisation in the country.

The Indonesian police had alleged that GAM had been involved in terrorist activities in the country, asserting that it was responsible for the bombing of the Jakarta Stock Exchange in 2000, Cijantung Mall in South Jakarta in 2001 and a series of bombings in Medan, North Sumatra. The inclusion of GAM in the UN terrorist list, according to UN resolution 1373/2000 on counter-terrorism, similar to what Sri Lanka has done with the Tamil Tiger separatists, would have obliged all member states to freeze GAM's economic resources and was intended to have the effect of reducing its capacity to mount military operations. The government's attempt to have GAM included in the UN's list of terrorist organisations has so far been still-born owing to the fact that it is highly unlikely that Indonesia would be able to convince the Security Council and the international community that the rebellion and separatist movement in Aceh qualify as situations that have the propensity to harm international peace and security. International law treats civil wars as purely a domestic matter, with the possible exception of self-determination conflicts. In this sense, Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force in international relations, though not in domestic situations. Only terrorist activities, which incur in a country with the possibility of threatening international peace and security, could qualify as a basis for the Council to intervene. Likewise, any attempt to link GAM with the Al Qaeda would founder on lack of evidence. Interestingly, in July 2002, GAM's rejection of claims that it had ties with Al Qaeda was supported by senior TNI sources in Banda Aceh.[16] GAM had rejected the initiative of Osama bin Laden's deputy Ayman Al Zawahiri when he visited Aceh in June 2000 with the aim of setting up Al Qaeda training bases in Aceh. In a sense, GAM possesses significant independent sources of funds, as well as an ideology that is secularist. Its intention is to set up an independent Sultanate in Aceh and is unlikely to be drawn to Al Qaeda's cause while fighting for independence from Indonesian rule. Furthermore, while Aceh may be a devoutly Muslim province, its society is pluralistic and minorities are well accepted and protected and therefore unlikely to gravitate to the insular Islamic ideologies championed by the groups like Al Qaeda.

Who to Implement?

The anti-terrorism laws enable the police to detain those suspected of terrorist activities for three days on a lower threshold of evidence than required in other cases. They provide the government the right to form anti-terror teams consisting of various departments, including the Indonesian military (TNI) and police, in an attempt to conduct wide-ranging intelligence operations.[17] The results of intelligence operations can also be used as *prima facie* legal evidence after being approved by a court of law with the approval process taking no longer than three days.

While a certain degree of coherence has been emerging within the government apparatus now that a legal basis has been established to fight terrorism, the principal concern is whether the momentum can be sustained. The biggest question mark is the implementation of the regulations. Indonesia's Achilles heel remains its weak intelligence mechanism riven with internal rivalries and its corrupt and politically influenced judiciary. Even if the law enforcement agencies could assemble credible evidence, usually all the good work may be undone during court proceedings owing to the fact that either the prosecutors involved in the trial were unable to prove any indictments or worse, did not have a professional commitment to upholding the law. A repetition of the situation similar to the East Timor tribunals where the state lost most of the cases would further compromise the credibility of an already dysfunctional legal system. In this regard better cooperation among security institutions and law enforcement agencies will be needed, together with the establishment of an independent judiciary.

Anomalies

While the new laws are comprehensive enough, they contain loopholes that raise complicated questions. Article 46 of *Perpu* no. 1/2002 stipulates that articles in this ruling may be implemented retroactively for particular cases prior to the endorsement of the ruling. However, in the amended 1945 Constitution, Article 28I, paragraph 1, stipulates that the right of citizens not to be prosecuted retroactively is a human right that shall not be diminished under any circumstances.

Legal experts, citing the Constitution, have expressed their opposition to the retroactive principle in the new laws, fearing its use to prosecute individuals arbitrarily for terrorism. They say that the only exceptions for the retroactive principle should be crimes against humanity, including widespread

and systematic killing and slavery. While legal experts acknowledge the need for a retroactive principle, agreeing that the government had to issue an additional regulation to specifically tackle the Bali bombing attack, they remain unclear whether the retroactive provision may set a precedent to be used in the future to try perpetrators of various previous unresolved acts of terror in the country. Human rights activists in future will likely emphasise that victims of such atrocities also need justice. There were a number of terror attacks during the tenure of former president Suharto directed against the state or against the general public by the military. The terror attacks related to the Istiqlal Mosque in 1978 and Gedung Seminari Aikitab in Malang in 1984 are cases that remain unresolved, as well as widespread abductions and terror tactics directed at anti-Suharto activists. Furthermore, since the laws do not distinguish between military and civilian terrorists, theoretically there is a small possibility of retroactive application to terrorist acts committed by the military.

The government is in a conundrum. Does the retroactive principle contradict the amended 1945 Constitution? If so, should the Constitution be amended to overcome this anomaly? Could the retroactive principle be seen as a breakthrough that should be implemented to try perpetrators of previous terror attacks during the rule of former president Suharto? The fact that a number of articles of the *Perpu* could be variously interpreted implies that the Government will need to quickly propose amendments to the two new anti terrorism laws. Of import, the term "emergency legislation" should be clarified in detail. Next, it is still open to interpretation what types of "emergency situation" the state is deemed to be in when a President has the right to issue a *Perpu*. The concerns of human rights and legal activists regarding article 26 of *Perpu* no. 1/2002 on the use of an "intelligence report" as the basis for the arrest of an alleged terrorist need to be addressed. Article 28, which empowers investigators to detain suspected terrorists for seven days, was opposed by legislators representing the Reform faction consisting of the National Mandate Party (PAN), and the Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera) and the Daulatul Ummah Party faction consisting of small Islamic parties. Article 28 remains a source of controversy to the Muslim community and pro democracy advocates. Furthermore, there is also a likelihood that witness testimony may be also given through teleconference media in the courtroom and legal provisions may be necessary to expedite this procedure.

Public Concerns

Despite the government's assurances, hard-line Muslim leaders have warned that the authorities would misuse the powers granted them under the new laws. As evidence, they pointed to the arrest of militant cleric Abu Bakar Bashir. Such concerns are unwarranted. Bashir had been arrested for offences under the Criminal Code. Under the existing Criminal Code Procedure (KUHAP), it is possible to detain suspects for up to 90 days with judicial approval.

A significant aspect of the *Perpu* no. 1/2002 is the provision that terrorist suspects can be arrested for seven days and held up to six months for questioning and prosecution. This is the sort of mechanism liable to raise the ire of groups opposing the new regulations for fear that it would grant sweeping new powers to the state. This leads to the critical concern of how much power should be conceded to the government and the police (with the military as the supporting force) in fighting terrorism. Would such a situation empower the government to use the regulations to justify anything in the name of security? NGO groups argue the point that terrorism allegations, which derive from US sources, could be used by the military for its own benefit to pave the way for either a better relationship with the US, or worse, as an opportunity to reinforce its political role. Such a dilemma confronting Indonesia could be understood when seen in the context of the country's long period of authoritarian rule and the huge challenge of instituting democratic norms.[18]

However, such concerns for the time being remain unfounded. During the New Order era, the security institutions had absolute authority to act against those found or suspected of disturbing security and order. A special and powerful institution called the Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order (Kopkamtib, Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban) was set up to enforce the law. However, the new anti-terrorism laws deal with terrorism-related issues only. The security institutions will not be granted any extra powers or authority to enforce the regulations. Perhaps, what the government needs to do is to reassure the public that accountability procedures are in place, namely, mechanisms for public feedback so that fair trials would be assured; provisions for the rehabilitation of suspects after acquittal; and punishment provided for false intelligence reporting.

In the final analysis, did the Parliament hand the government a blank cheque in its fight against terrorism? No, if the anti-terrorist laws had been perceived to have many flaws, they could have been repealed in the course of Parliamentary debates that preceded their passage. Under the amended 1945 Constitution, regulations *in lieu* of law issued by the government can

come into effect immediately upon its issuance; however it is mandatory for the House to approve it in the following session. Herein lay the challenge for President Megawati. Constitutionally, the issuance of any government regulations *in lieu* of law is a risky move as the president's credibility is at stake. It could have been a costly move if these regulations had failed to gain Parliamentary approval to become law. Understanding the high stakes involved, the government submitted four draft bills on Anti-Terrorism to Parliament as a safeguard in the event that the two *Perpus* were rejected. This was also in anticipation of a hiatus in the Law. Faced with decisions on the two *Perpus* and a number of draft bills also on Terrorism to consider, Parliament decided to discuss the *Perpu* before the Draft bills. Thus, when the two *Perpus* were passed and enacted into Law, Minister for Justice and Human Rights Yusril Ihza Mahendra decided to withdraw the draft bills, which were in essence almost identical to the *Perpu*. The big winner in this process was President Megawati who was not only vindicated by her initial decision to issue anti-terrorism regulations but more importantly it sent a strong signal to her doubters that she had the courage to take a high profile decision.

Ambiguous Role of the TNI

The intelligence agencies have been relatively unaffected by *reformasi*. The experience of post-communist states in Eastern Europe suggests that changes in the authoritarian structure of the state have usually resulted in the dismantling of intelligence agencies. At best while the democratisation process in Indonesia has invariably led to the activities of security agencies being scrutinised by NGO groups, the pace of reform however has been glacial due to the fact that political elites still view military endorsement as a key factor in ensuring political survival. The slow pace of security sector reform corresponds with the fact that civilian politicians find their bargaining position vulnerable under a structure of coalition politics and are seemingly unable to govern the country without the help of the military.

During the Suharto era, the responsibility for intelligence gathering involved a group of organisations, the most important being the Strategic Intelligence Agency (BAIS, Badan Intelijen Strategis) responsible for military and foreign intelligence, and the State Intelligence Coordinating Board (BAKIN, Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara), reconstituted in the post-Suharto era as the State Intelligence Agency (BIN, *Badan Intelijen Negara*). Intelligence staff are also assigned to the various army regional commands (KODAM, Komando Daerah Militer) whose reports are coordinated by

the Assistant for Intelligence to the Army Chief of Staff (Asintel, Assisten Intelijens) for submission to the Armed Forces Commander.

The main coordinating structure of intelligence during the bulk of the Suharto era that tracked closely political threats to the regime was Kopkamtib. This formidable organisation was redesignated in the late 1980s as the Coordination of Support for National Stability Development (Bakorstanas, Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional). Staffed by BAIS and BAKIN officers and headed by the Armed Forces Commander, Bakorstanas was disbanded during the Habibie era. Likewise, BAIS, which had become a ubiquitous element of the power structure under the leadership of Gen. Leonardus "Benny" Murdani, was emasculated in the backlash against New Order-era institutions that accompanied the end of the Suharto era. The agency was effectively "relegated" and placed under the TNI chief of staff for general affairs, and placed under the stewardship of a non-army officer, Air Vice Marshall Ian Santoso Perdanakusumah.

During the Suharto era, the lines of intelligence coordination that converged in the office of the President were thrown into disarray. It would be correct to conclude that Indonesia still lacks an effective coordinating mechanism for its intelligence agencies. Under the current structure, BAIS reports to TNI headquarters, while BIN, reports directly to the President. The police, after its separation from the armed forces, also report to the President. Theoretically, the armed forces commander could pass on BAIS intelligence to the President and the President could do likewise by passing on BIN intelligence to the Ministry of Defence.[19]

At present, BAIS does not have an operational role but primarily concentrates on information gathering and analysis. BAIS is organised into seven directorates: an Internal (Directorate A); Foreign (Directorate B); Defence (Directorate C); Security (Directorate D); Psychological Operations (Directorate E); Budgeting and Administration (Directorate F); and Intelligence Production (Directorate E). Independent units are tasked with collecting information in the field and relaying the information through intelligence units attached to the Kodams in the context of the territorial command structure. Field reports are then despatched to BAIS headquarters where they are collated and analysed by Directorate G (Intelligence Production) for submission to the armed forces commander.[20]

In 2001, the Wahid administration reorganised the intelligence network, wherein BAKIN was restructured and named BIN and made responsible to Parliament and the President. The rationale behind this restructuring exercise, according to Parliament Commission I chairperson Yasril Ananta Bahruddin,

was to reorientate the focus of intelligence gathering to preventive security functions focused on providing early warning of threats facing the state rather than the New Order obsession with surveillance of political activities.[21] BIN is also involved in the collection and analysis of intelligence information and is able to conduct intelligence operations with the assistance of TNI intelligence personnel. Megawati loyalist Lt. Gen. (ret) A. M. Hendropriyono, whose relationship with the TNI elite remains strained, leads BIN. Although President Megawati elevated the position of BIN chief to cabinet status, such moves have not enhanced Hendropriyono's ability to improve the coordination of the various intelligence agencies.

TNI chief Gen. Endriartono Sutarto had lobbied unsuccessfully for the creation of anti-terrorist task force to operate under TNI supervision. While not having control over anti-terrorism operations, the TNI still has major responsibilities for domestic security. Without question, its intelligence capabilities exceed that of the police and BIN. Considering that good intelligence is a bulwark in any war on terrorism, there is every likelihood that in time, the TNI may take a more high profile role in counter-terrorism considering its vast territorial structure that extends right down to district level. Another advantage it holds is its formal link in the network of international intelligence sharing where its counterparts have greater confidence in the coherence and dependability of TNI's intelligence than its civilian counterparts be it BIN or the police intelligence agency Intelpampolri (Intelijen Pengamanan Polisi) which carries out limited intelligence operations within the scope of security and public order.

Whether this means that the twin combination of a pervasive intelligence structure and shadow military administration that supported the Suharto regime would find justification in the war against terror and re-emerge, remains to be seen. In the final analysis, the TNI political position has been strengthened in the war against terror. President Megawati has implicitly demonstrated that the TNI is her most important political constituent and hopes that their mutually beneficial relationship will help her secure victory in the 2004 presidential election. Yet despite the TNI's undoubted qualities, would it be a reliable partner for the US in the war against terror? The TNI is engaged in its own "war against separatism". While the Al Qaeda may be the principal enemy of the US, combating separatism is the defining operational priority of the TNI and not the eradication of terrorist cells.

Nothing could have illustrated this point more clearly than the incident on 31 August 2002 near the Freeport McMoran enclave in West Papua where a group of American schoolteachers were ambushed, resulting in two people

killed and seven wounded. American eyewitness accounts have claimed that the attackers belonged to the Special Forces (Kopassus, Komando Pasukan Khusus). The TNI countered by stating that the attackers were Papuan separatists. A State Department official has acknowledged "a very great deal lies on the outcome (of the investigation)".[22] Furthermore, external elements that would champion the cause of the TNI will encounter stiff resistance within Indonesia where a widespread belief prevails that elements in the TNI have been actively promoting conflict and fomenting unrest as a means of control. Public trust in the TNI remains weak due to the prevailing "culture of impunity" that remains resilient within the TNI despite changed circumstances in post-Suharto Indonesia.

Indonesia and the War Against Terror: The Record So Far

As stated earlier in the essay, random bomb attacks of a similar kind, if not scope, have been the norm in Indonesia since the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998. These include two bomb attacks in April 2003 including a powerful blast at Jakarta's Sukarno-Hatta International Airport that injured 11 people. However, the Bali bombing was the first instance where many of the victims were from the West. Undoubtedly, the greater sensitivity to terrorist issues in the wake of September 11, coupled with the scale of the Bali attack and its international dimensions, created optimum conditions necessary for the Indonesian government to address the issue effectively. Before leaving Indonesia for the APEC leaders meeting in Mexico in late October 2001, President Megawati signed two presidential instructions (INPRES, Instruksi Presiden). The first, Inpres No. 4/2002 assigned the Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the task of formulating a comprehensive and coordinated policy for the "eradication of criminal acts of terrorism" with specific reference to the Bali bombings. The Coordinating Minister was also given the task of compiling operational measures to cover aspects of "preventing, avoiding, tackling, halting and solving criminal acts of terrorism and all the legal measures needed for their eradication". The second Inpres No. 5/2002 assigned to BIN the task of coordinating all intelligence activity, "in order to create a unified Indonesian intelligence community, which either singly or in concert is able to work efficiently and effectively". BIN's function as a coordination agency was therefore enhanced.

Within hours of the Bali tragedy, the international community responded with various forms of humanitarian assistance. Significantly, international assistance in the form of investigative teams from the US, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and Australia assisted the Indonesian police in the hunt for the perpetrators but also contributed in other aspects like victim identification.

A special task force was formed under the command of the former Police Chief of the Papua Province, Maj.-Gen. I Made Mangku Pastika, to investigate the Bali terror attack. Gen. Pastika and his team, aided by foreign investigators, adopted a painstaking inductive approach utilising state of the art forensic technology. However, police intelligence capabilities had been greatly compromised due to the separation of the police from the military proper. As a consequence, the police no longer had any access to military intelligence reports. Under the old security paradigm, Intelpampolri's main focus was criminal intelligence and it possessed no proper database on radical movements. Hence, for practical purposes, the police needed local military assistance if the investigation was to proceed in a comprehensive manner. To complement police efforts, an intelligence task force headed by Maj.-Gen. Muchdi of BIN proceeded with a parallel investigation.

BIN's involvement came with an important advantage; it maintained a working database on radical elements in Indonesia. The deductive investigative methods used by the team under Maj.-Gen. Muchdi seemed initially to yield more results than the incremental and time consuming approach adopted by the police. Two weeks after the bomb blast, aided by information supplied by their operatives, BIN claimed to have identified seven suspects and formally requested the police to arrest them. The police, however, were unable to make any arrests based on the evidence provided by BIN.

Nevertheless, by the end of the second week after the bomb attack, the police had made a significant breakthrough. With the help of experts from Mitsubishi and an expert in chemistry from the Australian National University hired by the Australian Federal Police, the Indonesian police's national forensic laboratory was able to decipher the chassis number of the Mitsubishi L-300 van believed to be the source of the car bomb. The discovery of the licence plate of the van located in debris in the vicinity of the bombsite enabled the police to discover the identity of the original owner of the van and its five subsequent owners leading to Amrozi, the sixth and final owner. Further incriminating evidence such as parts of the van and receipts from a chemical store for the purchase of a ton of potassium chlorate were found in Amrozi's house in Lamongan, East Java. Amrozi admitted his involvement in the Bali bombing when confronted with this evidence.[23]

Through information provided by Amrozi, the police were able to track down Abdul Aziz alias Imam Samudra, the alleged ringleader of the Bali bombing. Further information provided by Imam Samudra's family enabled the police to arrest him on 21 November 2002 in a commercial bus waiting to be ferried across the Sunda Strait to Sumatra. He had been planning to hide in Palembang before continuing on to Riau where he was to make plans to flee overseas. His close friends were also identified and their cellular phones tapped as soon as Samudra's whereabouts were discovered. In the course of tracking down Samudra, the police discovered that Samudra and his friends had robbed a gold shop in Serang in August 2002, and used the money to finance their terrorist activities.

Authorities are yet to charge Abu Bakar Bashir in relation to the Bali night-club bombings, although at least two of the suspects in the blasts spent time at his Islamic boarding school in Solo, Central Java. Police investigating the Bali blasts arrested about 30 individuals, including five accused plotters: operational commander Abdul Aziz alias Imam Samudra, financier Mubarok, religious teacher Mukhlas, and his brothers Amrozi and Ali Imron. Investigators are still searching for several other keys suspects, including electronics expert Dulmatin, and bomb experts Wayan and Dr. Azahari Husin.

Some reports have suggested Bashir was opposed to the Bali bombings, fearing they would lead to a fatal crackdown on Jemaah Islamiyah, but it now appears that police may yet charge him with pulling the strings. Police have turned up the heat on Bashir, accusing him of responsibility for the Bali bombings and recommending he be charged for involvement in a series of church blasts and a plot to assassinate President Megawati Sukarnoputri. General Pastika, said on Monday 20 January 2003 that a leader of regional terrorism network Jemaah Islamiyah was the "controller" of the attack. He then went on to say that Bashir was Jemaah Islamiyah's top leader. "We believe the emir [chief] is Abu Bakar Bashir," Pastika was quoted as saying by the Associated Press at a regional police seminar on terrorism.[24]

Bashir, who has been in police custody since late October and throughout the course of his trial, which began in April 2003, denied any wrongdoing and insisted that Jemaah Islamiyah did not exist, even though the security agencies of several Western and Southeast Asian nations have linked the banned organisation to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda network. The net around the cleric tightened on 22 January when police recommended that prosecutors charge him with using explosives in relation to a spate of church bombings that killed 18 people on Christmas Eve 2000, and with treason over the plot to

kill Megawati before she was president. Under the Criminal Code, the treason charge carries a maximum sentence of death and the explosives charge a maximum of 15 years behind bars. National Police spokesman Brigadier General Edward Aritonang further confirmed that the authorities have sufficient evidence to show that Bashir is guilty of treason for plotting to topple the government. Prosecutors concurred, saying the evidence was strong enough to prosecute and see that he spends time in jail. It is reasonable to expect that Gen. Pastika and his team through their inductive investigative methods should be able to wrap up this particular terrorist cell. There is a strong incentive for the police to solve this case, as this is the first time a high profile case has been given to the police rather than the military. Whether this method will yield the same success when the police attempt to trace the *dalang* or orchestrator of the Bali tragedy remain to be seen. Also preventive security is something the police will find difficult to achieve owing to the fact that they lack not only resources but more important an effective database of domestic radicals and their links to international terrorist groups. Intelligence on domestic groups was the purview of the military and there is a strong likelihood that many of the files could be "lost".[25] There is also the concern that the intelligence services have been so weakened and politicised over the last decade that they have not been tracking radical groups closely, and even if they have good data, deep-seated institutional rivalries may hinder cooperation.

Such considerations were once again evident in the aftermath of the 5 August 2003 J. W. Marriott Hotel bombing when accusations were once again raised that poor coordination by the security agencies was a significant consideration in the final assessment of why Indonesia was yet again vulnerable to such terror attacks. Hardliners close to President Megawati, namely Defence Minister Matori Abdul Djalil, TNI Commander Endriartono Sutarto, BIN Chief Hendropriyono and Home Affairs Minister Hari Sabarno stated unequivocally that Indonesia needed the introduction of an Internal Security Act (ISA) similar to Malaysia and Singapore, sparking concerns yet again that the military were striving to recoup their previously dominant role, sidelining police authority over internal security matters in the process. Similarly suggestions were made by TNI leaders that the military's role be enhanced to enable it to assist the police in their efforts to strengthen internal security. Likewise, security agencies were united in their calls for the new anti-terrorism laws to be revised on matters relating to the legal conditions of arrest and detention of terror suspects.

In short, rather, than focus on streamlining matters relating to counter-terrorism coordination, calls were being made to give more power to the

security-related agencies. At the time of writing, the major factions in the House of Representatives (DPR, Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat) were in agreement to revise the newly enacted laws on anti-terrorism, but aside from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P, Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan), they were not keen on giving more power to the security agencies in the fight against terror. In anticipation of widespread protests over the plan for an ISA, the likely follow-up will be that existing laws will be strengthened rather than the creation of a separate internal security act. Proposed revisions may give more power to the military and the intelligence to play a greater role in the country's fight against terrorism. On 19 August 2003, Jakarta established a task force to study several articles of current anti-terrorist legislation with particular consideration given to strengthening laws related to pre-emptive measures against terrorist attacks. Principally, the article slated for revision is article 26 of Law No. 15/2003 pertaining to use of intelligence reports. The members of the Parliament's Commission for Defence and Foreign Affairs (Komisi 1) remain sceptical over the necessity to revise the anti-terrorism legislation, stressing that Indonesia's problems have its origins in the poor coordination between state intelligence and security officials rather than inadequate legal provisions.[26]

More effort is needed to reduce corruption as well. Ultimately, the issue of document fraud, porous borders and illegal population movements across boundaries will continue to plague Indonesia if immigration graft is not addressed. Similarly, success in nullifying the threat posed by terrorism will be elusive if no systematic attempt is made to ascertain if JI-like groups can spawn splinter elements that may be even more militant. A very important question to ask is why Indonesia has become such a benign environment for an organisation of such violence like JI.

Conclusion

Strong external pressure, particularly from Australia, coupled with methodical police work with the aid of foreign forensic and intelligence assistance has enabled the authorities to apprehend the terrorist cell that carried out the Bali terror attack. The death sentence pronounced by the court in Denpasar on August 7 for Amrozi was the country's first verdict under the new anti-terrorism law. The death sentence was again meted out to co-conspirator Imam Samudra the following month.[27] Amrozi's brothers and fellow suspects, Ali Ghufron alias Mukhlas and Ali Imron, are expected to receive similar

sentences in the coming months (Ali Imron received a life sentence — Editors). However, the difficult task of how far the government will pursue the JI and the wider network of terror and violence that has constantly plagued Indonesia, and what means would be employed to rid the country of these elements, remain to be seen. The terror, what it represents and the manner in which counter-terrorist measures will be utilised threatens to place Indonesia in a catch-22 situation as the authorities wrestle with the dilemma of playing a credible part in the war against terror without succumbing to Suharto era-like security state norms with the repression and violence associated with it.

Fighting terrorism no doubt poses a difficult challenge for any democracy. Those who attempt to achieve political change through violence offend democracy. Similarly, repressive anti-terrorism or security laws also compromise democracy. The challenge is to devise legislation and strategies that can prevent and punish terrorism while respecting democracy, including strong political or religious dissent. The new anti-terrorism laws do seem to have achieved a balance between Indonesia's desire to respect international law and its quest to protect its fledgling democracy. Furthermore, the professionalism exhibited by the police in investigating the Bali bombing is a positive development, and hopefully, a starting point for serious reform of the police apparatus.

Indonesia's belated entry in the war on terror will come as a relief to the rest of the region enduring an immense challenge as the proponents of global terrorism open another front in Southeast Asia. In that regard, the new anti-terrorism laws expand the scope for regional cooperation in the war against terror. Likewise, the formation of a Terrorism Eradication Coordination Desk[28] and plans by Jakarta to establish a consortium[29] to coordinate financial assistance from the international community aimed at enhancing the country's efforts to fight terrorism, will hopefully be starting points in developing a comprehensive strategy in combating terrorism. As the J. W. Marriott bombing indicates, much work still needs to be done. The security agencies still cannot quantify with accuracy the threat that needs to be addressed, specifically in relation to infrastructure, recruitment methods, philosophies of motivation, the capabilities evident in the various terror cells and what their future intentions may be.[30] Indeed, more work needs to be done to understand JI's organic character. JI and like-minded groups did not spring up from a vacuum. In the current fixation over JI's Al Qaeda roots, an important issue has been glossed over: the need to pay greater significance to the local dimension of JI's development and sustainability. Hopefully, inaction and lax attitudes will be a thing of the past and the Bali and Marriott tragedies should be the

catalyst for Jakarta to work in tandem with the region (and the international community) to overcome this threat.

Appendix

Crucial points of the Government Regulation *in lieu* of Law (*Perpu*) No. 1/2002 on fighting terrorism:

- The new regulation defines terrorism as any violent act that could create terror or insecurity among the public, violate the public's freedom, cause the death of other people or cause the destruction of vital or strategic objects.
- These crimes are then broken down into detailed acts, ranging from petty acts such as the issuing of bogus threats to major crimes such as using a nuclear weapon to create terror.
- A corporation involved in a terrorist act can be fined up to Rp1 trillion and have its operational licence revoked.
- Unlike the Criminal Code, the antiterrorism regulation allows intelligence reports to be used as legal evidence.
- Based on *prima facie* evidence, suspected terrorists can be arrested for seven days and detained for a period of six months for questioning and prosecution.
- Investigators also have the authority to go through personal mail and parcels, and to tap telephone conversations or other forms of communication, with the actual tapping being permissible for a period of up to one year.
- Investigators, prosecutors and judges are given the power under this regulation to block any bank account belonging to suspected terrorists or those allegedly funding terrorist activities.
- The state also has the obligation to pay compensation and restitution to the victims of terrorist acts.

The Government Regulation *in lieu* of Law No. 2/2002 allows retroactively bringing the perpetrators of the Bali bombing attack to justice.

Source: *The Jakarta Post*, 21 October 2002.

Notes

1. For a comprehensive study of the Jemaah Islamiyah *modus operandi*, see International Crisis Group, "Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah

Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates", Jakarta/Brussels, *Asia Report*, No. 43, 11 December 2002.

2. For the most comprehensive discussion on the role of the intelligence agencies, see Richard Tanter, "Intelligence Agencies and Third World Militarisation: A Case Study of Indonesia", 1966–1989, PhD Thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 1991.
3. For a useful summary of the various conspiracy theories, see Matthew Moore, "Indonesians Face the Painful Truth — The CIA Didn't Do It", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 2003.
4. Translated as "youth", its historical reference is to the young activists who led the opposition to the Japanese in the closing months of the Second World War, and later impacted on the momentous events following the Declaration of Independence and the war against the returning Dutch colonists. From September 1945 large numbers of *pemuda* split along political lines with the majority following the Amir Sjarifuddin and Sutan Sjahrir factions forming the beginnings of youth organisations that participated in the revolution. They would later become the foundation of left and right wing youth movements in the 1950s and 1960s.
5. For a useful study on radical Islamic movements see, Martin Van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in post-Suharto Indonesia", *Southeast Asian Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2002), pp. 117–154.
6. The KPSI aspires for the implementation of *shariah* within the context of a special South Sulawesi autonomous region modelled on the example of Aceh. This organisation can lay claim to links with the mainstream Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama organisations plus individuals who are influential at the legislative and executive levels of government. Its first congress in October 2000 held in Makassar was opened by the Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi and attended by Jakarta politicians like A. M. Fatwa together with participants such as Habib Husein Al-Habsyi and Abu Bakar Bashir, from the first Mujahidin congress in Yogyakarta (August 2000) where the KPSI concept had its genesis. Overseas participants included Abdul Hadi Awang from the Malaysian opposition party PAS. A year later, participants at the second congress held in December 2001 read like a male Who's Who of South Sulawesi. The governor of South Sulawesi, chair of the local parliament, and the mayor of Makassar were members of the Advisory Committee for the second congress as were M. Yusuf Kalla (Coordinating Minister in the Megawati cabinet) and Tamsil Linrung, who was later arrested with Agus Dwikarna in the Philippines. For more details on the KPSI see, Dias Pradadimara and Burhaman Junedding, "Who is Calling For Islamic Law? The Struggle to Implement Islamic Law in South Sulawesi", *Inside Indonesia* (October–December, 2002), available at <www.serve.com/inside/edit72/Politics%20Dias.htm>.
7. Pradadimara and Junedding, "Who is Calling For Islamic Law?".
8. Juwono Sudarsono, "Politics and Society After 12 October", *Van Zorge Report on Indonesia*, Vol. IV, No. 19 (18 November 2002), p. 14.

9. Bambang Widjajanto and Douglas Kammen, "The Structure of Military Abuse", *Inside Indonesia*, No. 62 (April–June, 1999), available at <www.insideindonesia.org/edit62/dom2.htm>.
10. Widjajanto and Kammen, "The Structure of Military Abuse".
11. Widjajanto Kammen, "The Structure of Military Abuse".
12. A shortened version of this section assessing Indonesia's new anti-terrorism regulations can be found in Leonard C. Sebastian, "The Conundrum of Jakarta's Anti-Terrorism Moves", *The Straits Times* (Singapore), 2 November 2002.
13. At its inception, a common misperception reinforced by the popular press was that the anti-terrorism legislation was an emergency decree. For the complete text see Peraturan Pemerintah Pengganti Undang Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 1 Tahun 2002 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme and Tentang Pemberlakuan Tindak Pidana Terrorisme Pada Peristiwa Peledakan Bom Di Bali Tanggal 12 October 2002. The full text is available at <www.hukumonline.com>, accessed on 22 October 2002.
14. The new regulations were a revised version of the Anti-terrorism Bill that had been debated in the DPR for a number of months with little progress, because of strong public unease that the legislation would grant excessive powers to a now discredited security apparatus. Concerns abounded that these new powers would be used to justify a return to the type of political control and forms of institutionalised violence that characterised the military during the Suharto era.
15. See Donald E. Weatherbee, "The 'War on Terrorism' in Indonesia: A setback for Democracy?", paper prepared for the Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Regional Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, Jekyll Island, Georgia, 17–19 January 2003.
16. "Aceh Links to Al Qaeda Dismissed", available at <edition.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/asiapcf/southeast/07/12/indo.aceh/>.
17. "Hakim Perlu Bantuan Ahli untuk Periksa Laporan Intelijen", available at <www.hukumonline.com/artikel_detail.asp?id=6713>.
18. Indonesia's legislature, its first democratically elected body since 1955, has delivered extensive reforms, reflecting the influence of the reform movement which emphasises the need for the introduction of strong guarantees for civil and human and rights. Such concerns are reflected in "Awas, Perpu Anti Terorisme Jadi Jalan Militer untuk Kembali Berkuasa", available at <www.hukumonline.com/artikel_detail.asp?id=6752>.
19. W. Ingo, "Indonesia's New Intelligence Agency. How? Why? And What For?", *Watch Indonesia*, No. 1 (1 November 2000), available at <home.sanfu.de/watchin/BIN/html>.
20. Discussion with BAIS officer.
21. Ingo, "Indonesia's New Intelligence Agency. How? Why? And What For?".
22. Matthew Daley, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and the Pacific Affairs, in "The Impact of the Bali Bombing". Report of a Conference

at the United States-Indonesia Society, 26 November 2002, available at <www.usindo.org/Briefs/Impact%20of%20the%20Bali%20Bombings.htm>.

23. For a useful construction of the investigation process, see Hermawan Sulistyo, ed., *Bom Bali: Buku Putih tidak resmi Investigasi Teror Bom Bali* (Jakarta: Pensil-324, November 2002).
24. The police have alleged that they have details of a May 2002 meeting at which the five militants who plotted the Bali attack received Bashir's approval for their plan. Furthermore, a handbook discovered during a December raid in Solo in a home of a Bali bomb suspect named Saad alias Achmad Roichan has convinced the police of the existence of the Jemaah Islamiyah. The photocopied manual written for Jemaah Islamiyah members with Arabic writing on its front cover, highlighted a fundamental rule that "all operations must be approved by the group's emir or supreme commander". Confronted with this evidence, Mukhlas informed the police during questioning that Bashir was the emir. See, "Evidence Against Cleric Mounts", *The Washington Post*, 12 February 2003 and "Indonesian Police Say Bali Blasts Had 'Blessing' of Cleric", *The Washington Post*, 29 January 2002.
25. Bambang Harymurti, "The Impact of the Bali Bombing".
26. "House Backs Plans for Antiterror Law", *The Jakarta Post*, 20 August 2003.
27. "Imam Samudra Gets Death Sentence for Planning Bali Blasts", *Channelnewsasia.com*, 10 September 2003, available at <www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/southeastasia/view/48708/1/.html>.
28. The Terrorism Eradication Coordinating Desk was initiated on 23 December 2002 and is responsible to the Coordinating Minister for Politics and Security, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. Enacted to comply with Presidential Instruction INPRES No. 4/2002, the Desk is to be headed by Inspector General of Police, Ansyad Mbai. The "Desk" has 15 permanent members and 43 ad hoc members, whose duty is to ensure closer coordination among the various government agencies in the war against terrorism. The Anti-Terrorism Desk, nonetheless, does not have executive powers. The Desk formulates policies and provides input and recommendations to the national leadership, while operationally the Desk coordinates a number of intelligence agencies, such as BIN, BAIS and the Police, which are represented.
29. The formation of the Consortium and its financial contribution would have immense implications for preventive counter terrorism work if it is true that BIN is only to receive a paltry 17 billion rupiah in the 2003 budget for counter-terrorism activities. See *Kompas* report cited in FBIS-EAS-2002–1122. On the formation of the Consortium, see Fabiola Desy Unidjaja, "Jakarta to Set Up Antiterrorism Group", *The Jakarta Post,* 9 January 2003.
30. B. Raman, "Jihadi Hydra: Futile to Just Cut Off Its heads", *The Straits Times*, 7 August 2003.

Chapter 17

Assessing Indonesia's Vulnerability in the Wake of the American-Led Attack on Iraq

*Tatik S. Hafidz**

Introduction

In late 2001, thousands of Muslims swarmed the streets of Jakarta and other cities and small towns in Indonesia in massive protests against an American-led attack on Afghanistan. The war on terror was perceived as directed against Islam. The heightened tension that threatened to generate even greater political turbulence eventually forced President Megawati Sukarnoputri to withdraw her support for the war on terror, which she had pledged during her visit to Washington DC, shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Since then Indonesia had generally been perceived as the only country in Southeast Asia that had done very little in disrupting international terrorist networks believed to have been operating in the country. It was widely seen as "the weakest link" in regional cooperation against terrorism.

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But the terrorist attacks in Bali on 12 October 2002 — and later, the bombing at the hotel J. W. Marriott in Jakarta on 5 August 2003 — changed the government's attitude rather drastically. It left Megawati with no option but to revise her initial reluctance to risk a possible head-on collision with Indonesian Muslims. The government's anti-terrorism law had been blocked by many Muslim groups, which feared that the proposed legislation could have been used against them. However, under extreme international pressure, Megawati, bypassing the long deliberation process in the parliament, exercised her constitutional rights to issue two provisional anti-terrorism regulations, which were applied retroactively to investigate the Bali bombings.[1] In anticipation of the government's new-found assertiveness to wage war on terror, a few hard-line Muslim groups such as the armed Jihad Militia (Laskar Jihad) and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI) disbanded and temporarily "froze" their organisations respectively, whilst some other groups also decided to lie low.

In the wake of the American-led attack on Iraq in March 2003, many Muslim organisations expressed criticism of what they saw as an unjustified action against a sovereign Muslim nation. The attack on Iraq, especially as it was launched unilaterally, only amplified this perception. The question is, would regime change in Baghdad provide Muslim hard-liners in Indonesia with an impetus to re-surface? If so, would this lead to a serious deterioration in the security situation in the light of domestic tensions ahead of the 2004 presidential and parliamentary elections? More importantly, would we see an increased terrorist threat on the scale of the Bali bombings — or worse — in the world's most populous Muslim country?

Striking Megawati's Achilles Heel

Before assessing the impact of the American-led invasion of Iraq on Indonesian political instability, it will be useful to understand the background of widespread public protests against the earlier attack on Afghanistan. In early October 2001, a wave of nation wide protests against the American intention to attack Afghanistan began to emerge, intensifying when the strike did take place. A few hard-line Muslim groups even threatened to conduct street searches — known locally as "sweeping" — against Americans and other Westerners. This led to a massive exodus of Western tourists and forced several Western governments to issue a ban on travel to Indonesia. In some places, several Muslim organisations held open recruitment of *jihad* volunteers to defend their "Muslim brethren". Despite this unrealistic rhetoric, as these

organisations were largely short of funds, Jakarta felt impelled to demonstrate a token of solidarity by donating food and medical supplies to Afghanistan.

The pro-Afghan disturbances represented the first major display of public sentiment over an international issue. Indonesians had largely been preoccupied with continuing multidimensional crises after the fall of the New Order, thus public protests had hitherto been dominated by domestic agenda. But although the street protesters appeared to express a unified, monolithic solidarity with a Muslim nation under attack, on closer inspection it is possible to discern that different agendas were being played out. Hence at least three groups could be loosely identified amongst the protesters.

First, there were those who were genuinely concerned over what they perceived as American jingoism: a US unilateral attack against a sovereign nation without first proving that it was indeed guilty of harbouring a terrorist group. These protesters expressed concern that an American-imposed definition of terrorism and what constituted a "terrorist", and its subsequent doctrine of pre-emptive attack, would violate democratic principles and jeopardise relations amongst states. Students' groups, human rights movements and moderate Muslim organisations belonged to this category.

Second, there were those who believed that the American-led war on terror was actually a camouflaged war on Islam. Many Indonesian Muslims subscribed to the widely circulated theory that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and/or Israel's Secret Service, Mossad, had actually been the perpetrators of the September 11 attacks, but they had deliberately blamed Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda so as to discredit Islam. Sensing a lucrative market for such conspiracy theories, a few media and publishing houses decided to ride the rising anti-American sentiment amongst the Muslim community and encouraged instant writers and analysts to pen the wildest theories ever. Amazingly, some of those publications became instant best sellers.

Third, there were those who manipulated the international issue to score a domestic political point against Megawati. The attack on Afghanistan, which was dubbed "the first war in the new millennium", began in November 2001, a few weeks after the "honeymoon period" of the newly inaugurated President Megawati was over. Megawati's emergence had represented a "marriage of convenience" between her nationalist party, a loose alliance of Islamic parties and a more politically assertive military, which led to the forced exit of President Abdurrahman Wahid on 23 July 2001. Ironically, she had earlier been denied the presidency in the October 1999 presidential election by the same Islamic alliance, due to her perceived anti-Islam image.[2]

When Megawati ignored strong objections from some Muslim leaders and continued with her plan to visit the American capital shortly after the September 11 attacks, during which she pledged her support for the American cause, her political rivals at home played up the issue and struck at her Achilles heel: her lack of Islamic credentials. Faced with the possibility of losing crucial Muslim support, Megawati was forced to issue a vague statement during a religious gathering held at the State Mosque Istiqlal. In it she criticised the use of violence in combating terrorism, without directly referring to the American-led attack on Afghanistan. The statement pacified Muslims, silenced her critics and street protests began to subside. It is interesting to note that while she was considered a "loser" internationally for having missed an opportunity to strike a lucrative financial deal with Washington, she scored a point domestically for having passed her first major political test.

Shared Across the Board

In 2003, a totally different picture existed on the ground. If the protests against the American attack on Afghanistan were dominated by hard-line Muslim organisations, the later rejection of US President George W. Bush's plan to attack Iraq was shared across the board, regardless of religious and political orientation. Significantly, it was the moderate Muslim and non-Muslim organisations that seized the initiative to launch a joint effort to prevent the war on Iraq. The "traditionalist" Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the "modernist" Muhammadiyah, which together boast more than fifty million members and represent the mainstream of Indonesian Islam, initiated an intra-religious move to lobby international powers, including the Holy Throne of Vatican and members of the European Union. At a meeting with visiting British Foreign Minister Jack Straw held at the NU's headquarters in Jakarta in early January 2003, leaders representing different religions in Indonesia delivered one unanimous message: they rejected the American-British joint plan to attack Iraq, since they felt it had no moral, formal and substantial grounds.[3] It is also interesting to note that the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) — a forum of young Muslim intellectuals hailed by Western analysts as representing the "liberal face" of Islam but condemned by hard-line Muslim groups at home as *kafir* (infidel) — became the first organisation to stage a street protest against the plan to attack Iraq in October 2002.

There was also convergence between the government's position and the Muslim stance on the Iraqi issue. Unlike its ambivalence over the American attack on Afghanistan, the Megawati government made it clear from the very

beginning that it would not support a unilateral American-led attack on Iraq. Coincidentally, Washington's decision in early 2003 to include Indonesia on its "watch list" of 26 terrorist-prone countries, thereby requiring any visiting Indonesian male to report periodically to an American immigration authority, sparked tensions between the two countries. Jakarta was irked that the decision was made despite its success in unravelling the network of perpetrators of terrorist attacks on Bali. In an unprecedented move, Megawati decided to issue a "travel advisory" against the US.

Nevertheless, despite the common antipathy to the US attack on Iraq on the part of both Jakarta and Muslim groups, most Indonesian analysts warned that the potential for instability remained high, because the American attack only worsened the already heightened domestic political tension ahead of the 2004 elections. Many competing political groups, it was argued, could conceivably use the Iraqi issue to further de-legitimise Megawati's beleaguered government, already under fire for its controversial economic policies, which were seen by many as symbolising her subjugation to foreign pressure. She had still to defend herself against Muslim critics that her anti-terrorism policy reflected an American agenda, and a soft stance on the Iraqi issue would only amplify the perception. Thus, she was forced to traverse a delicate line between accommodating rising domestic religious and nationalistic sentiments to keep her chance for re-election in 2004 and the need to maintain a rational foreign policy for the sake of broader national interests.

In the longer term, the unilateral American-led attack on Iraq could also worsen relations amongst religious groups in Indonesia. Hussein Umar, leader of a hard-line Muslim organisation, the Council of Propagation of Islam in Indonesia (DDII), warned that many Muslims would see the attack on Iraq and its leader, Saddam Hussein as confirmation of their suspicion that the US was actually waging war on Islam.[4] Saddam Hussein was by no means an ideal representative of Islam, but many Indonesian Muslims felt that he spoke out their anger over what they perceived as American dominance over and subjugation of the Muslim World. The perception that the US subverted a sovereign Muslim nation strengthened the deep-seated anti-American sentiment amongst Muslim communities. It also legitimised the radicals and de-legitimised their moderate Muslim counterparts. In turn, it jeopardised a series of efforts initiated by moderate Muslim leaders shortly after the Bali bombings to build both inter- and intra-religious confidence and co-operation aimed at combating manipulation of religion for terrorist activities. As Ismail Yusanto, a spokes person for another hard-line Muslim organisation, Hizbut Tahrir, put it, the American attack on Iraq could stoke a dangerous mixture of nationalist

and religious sentiments on the flaming Indonesian ground.[5] The question is, "Will the attack lead to a widespread Islamic radicalism and an escalation of terrorist threats?"

The October 12 Bombings: A Turning Point

The October 12 bombings marked a major turning point in Indonesia's stance on the war on terror as it changed the attitudes of both the government and Muslim communities, including the hard-line Muslim groups.

Prior to the tragedy, Indonesia had been widely criticised for its indecisiveness in waging war on terror. Unlike the governments of its Southeast Asian neighbours that threw their weight behind Washington, Jakarta appeared to be highly ambivalent. Officially, it supported regional and international cooperation to fight terrorism by participating in the attempts at combating terrorist financial support and apprehending several Al Qaeda operatives in the country. However, it sent confusing signals to the outside world when government officials continued to deny the existence of an international terrorist network in the country despite credible information provided by neighbouring governments that suggested otherwise. Jakarta refused initially to arrest Abu Bakar Bashir, the alleged leader of Jemaah Islamiyah, a nebulous network of radical Muslims declared by the US and the UN as a terrorist group shortly after the Bali bombings, despite Washington's repeated requests.[6]

Indonesia's indecision over the war on terror was due to a number of domestic factors that continue to characterise its difficult transition to democracy, including the resurgence of political Islam, the rise of negative nationalism, the lack of adequate legal mechanisms to combat terrorism and a weak security capability to patrol the borders of the vast archipelago.

But the most important factor remained Megawati's own shaky leadership. She led "a rainbow coalition" cabinet, which was severely divided on how to respond to the drastic change in the post-September 11 international arena. In the first days after the tragedy, her cabinet sessions were dominated by concerns over the impact of the September 11 attacks on Indonesia's economic recovery, with most economic ministers predicting a gloomy scenario. Against this backdrop, some of her advisers were attracted to the idea, known internally as "the Musharraf scenario", named after President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan.[7] Under the "scenario", Megawati was urged to follow the example of President Musharraf who extracted financial benefits in return for his support for the American attack on Afghanistan.

However, other cabinet members disputed the proposal. They warned her of the price that she might have to pay, arguing that she could not afford risking a Muslim backlash especially when she needed their political support. When Megawati departed for Washington in October 2001, she apparently had the "Musharraf scenario" in mind, hence her pledged support for the war on terror. However, when faced with the domestic outcry against the American attack on Afghanistan, she was forced to adopt a more cautious approach, which as time went by, gradually slipped into the "business as usual" attitude. She even remained unmoved when Vice President Hamzah Haz decided to come forward as the "defender" of Muslim radicals for his own political purposes.

The Bali bombings changed Megawati's attitude drastically. At a personal level, she retained a special affection for the lovely island, home to her most loyal supporters and Balinese aristocrat ancestors. In economic terms, the bombings virtually wiped out tourism industry in the island, cost Indonesia damage estimated at no less than $10 billion and forced the government to revise its annual budget.[8] More importantly, Megawati was under intense foreign pressure to demonstrate her commitment to combat terrorism — or risk severe international repercussions.

For the first time since her rise to power, she demonstrated decisive leadership. In an unprecedented move, which perhaps surprisingly elicited relatively insignificant domestic protests, she welcomed international co-operation in investigating the bombings. She risked opposition from the Muslims and human rights activists in issuing the provisional anti-terrorism regulations. She signed two presidential decrees to improve intelligence co-ordination, which was largely blamed for its failure to provide early warning of the attacks. And despite public scepticism of its effectiveness, the Office of Co-ordinating Minister of Politics and Security set up an anti-terrorism desk and declared anti-terrorism policy one of its top priorities for 2003.[9]

These new policies and regulations would have been of little use if their implementation had been flawed. But thanks to the unprecedented hard work of the National Police Force (Polri), which, unexpectedly, performed impressively with the assistance of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the network of the perpetrators of the bombings was unravelled in a relatively short time. Long considered as the junior partner of the Indonesian National Military (TNI), the Polri had to struggle to find its own identity after the two institutions were separated on 1 April 1999. Given its poor track record and its lack of adequate equipment and qualified human resources, few Indonesians expected that the Polri would be able to resolve the terrorist puzzle. When in

less than one month the investigation team announced that it had arrested an unknown mechanic named Amrozi and declared him a suspect, many Indonesians suspected that the Polri had resorted to its old behaviour of fabricating evidence.

But this time the sceptics were dead wrong: through diligent detective work the investigation team had managed to collect evidence to prove that Amrozi was indeed one of the perpetrators of the bombings. Presented with hard evidence, Amrozi relented and began to "spill the beans" on his terrorist network, which led the police to other suspects, including "most wanted" Imam Samudra, also implicated in the December 2000 church bombings, and Amrozi's elder brother, Ali Ghufron aka Mukhlas, who was said to have succeeded Hambali, Jemaah Islamiyah's recently captured top leader.[10] On 18 February 2003, the police staged an open "theatre" for Ali Imron, Amrozi's youngest brother who was also a suspect in the case, to demonstrate how he assembled the bombs that were used in what the Police Chief Gen. Da'i Bachtiar described as "the worst terrorist attack in Indonesian history". The demonstration helped to convince the largely sceptical Indonesian public, who retained certain passion for conspiracy theories, that those *kampong* boys — a reference to the three brothers' humble beginnings in the village of Tenggulun in East Java — did master the art of terror.[11] After four months of investigation, the Police submitted the investigation dossiers to the State Prosecutors to commence legal proceedings. In August, the High Court of Denpasar began to hand in its verdicts, including death sentences for Amrozi, Samudra and Mukhlas.

The police also managed to collect evidence that the Bali bombings were somewhat related to a series of bombings that have rocked Indonesia since 2000, including the bombing at the residence of the Philippines ambassador in Jakarta and the December 2000 church bombings, all of which were allegedly masterminded by Hambali. More importantly, it successfully broke into the terrorist network and rounded up its members, although some of its key operators remained at large. In late June 2003, the police arrested Jhoni Hendrawan aka Idris, one of the suspects in the Bali bombings, along with ten other operatives of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) who were involved in two robbery cases in Medan and Pekanbaru.[12] Three weeks later, the police raided a house in Semarang and found huge stocks of ammunitions, weapons, various kinds of explosives, and other lethal materials, and arrested four JI suspects, who were suspected to have planned several explosions in some parts of Indonesia and to assassinate a number of politicians.[13] All in all, no less than 40 JI suspects have been arrested in various parts of the country in the past ten months and their

numbers could increase as the police continue to penetrate into the terrorist network.

The success of the police in resolving a major international terrorist case helped Megawati to pass her second major political test. Contrary to some international analysts' gloomy predictions that the Bali crisis would lead to an "Indonesian collapse under international pressure", she somehow managed to restore international confidence in the Indonesian ability to deal with terrorist threats.

On the other hand, the Bali tragedy was a setback for Muslim communities. Prior to the bombings, many Muslim leaders, including the moderate figures, believed that the US and its allies were mounting a "black propaganda" campaign against Indonesia through a series of media revelations about the existence of international terrorist networks and Al Qaeda cells in the country.[14] Some of them subscribed to a widely circulated conspiracy thesis that the CIA and Mossad masterminded the Bali bombings to prove that terrorist networks do exist in Indonesia, so that Jakarta would be drawn into supporting the American-imposed war on terror.

But when the police investigation unearthed convincing evidence that the perpetrators of the bombings were members of militant Muslim group with a possible link to international terrorism, they were shocked to a bitter realisation that religious extremism did in fact exist within the community. Many of them realised that they had made a mistake in permitting Muslim hard-liners to "hijack" the Islamic discourse in Indonesia.[15] Shortly after the October 12 tragedy, the NU, Muhammadiyah and other moderate Muslim organisations initiated a series of intra-religious dialogues with various Muslim groups, including the hard-liners, in order to reduce the potential for religious extremism.

There remained, however, inevitable tensions between the government and the Muslim community. Although most Muslim leaders supported the government's anti-terrorism policy, they also expressed concern that Islam was being stigmatised as identical with terrorism. More recently, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) advised the government and the media against using the word "Jemaah Islamiyah" (literally "Muslim community") to refer to the religious extremist group as it carries a derogatory connotation of Islam, and instead advised the use of a more neutral term "*oknum*" (individual).[16] They also objected that the Islamic boarding school or *pesantren* was being widely regarded as the "breeding ground" for religious extremism, simply because some of the key suspects of the Bali bombings hailed from *pesantrens*.[17] Many *pesantren* heads subsequently complained about tight security surveillance of

their activities due to suspicions that they were harbouring extremists. These tensions could at some point have inflamed grassroots sentiment, if incidents such as the alleged sexual harassment of female *santris* by police investigators searching for evidence at Amrozi's *pesantren* in East Java, had been allowed to continue.[18]

In truth, after Bali it was the hard-line Muslim groups that suffered the heaviest blow. The four years of *reformasi* after the end of the New Order permitted the re-emergence of radical Islamic groups, whose origins and historical backgrounds can be traced back to the *Darul Islam* Movement, the first "rebellion" under the banner of Islam in Indonesia.[19] Prior to the 12 October tragedy, they somewhat sidelined the largely moderate Muslim community. For a while, they dominated the images of Indonesian Islam as their actions captured more (international) media attention. Buoyed by the resurgence of political Islam and the weakening of state authority resulting from chaotic reforms, some of the groups became involved in violent armed activities without facing any significant penalties. In some cases, their activities were even encouraged, and given both open and tacit support from certain individuals in the military, bureaucracy and political circles.

Two radical groups that dominated media coverage over the past four years were the FPI and the Communication Forum for the Inheritors and Followers of the Prophet's Teachings (Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah Wa al-Jemaah, FKASWJ), better known as the Laskar Jihad. The two organisations differed in their action strategies, although they both subscribed to a rigid scripturalist interpretation of Islam. Whilst FPI focused its activity against violations of religious principles such as prostitution, gambling, and alcoholic drinking, members of the Laskar Jihad engaged in armed struggle in pursuit of what they perceived as their self-appointed task to defend Muslims against non-Muslim aggression. FPI incited protests amongst urban inhabitants due to their negligence of the law, but the Laskar Jihad elicited national concern as their involvement in conflict-torn areas in Central Sulawesi and Maluku impeded attempts at resolving the conflicts peacefully.

Shortly after the October 12 bombings, Jafar Umar Thalib, the leader of the Laskar Jihad, announced that he had disbanded the organisation and subsequently withdrew members of his armed militias from Maluku. Two days later, Habib Rizieq Syihab, leader of FPI, announced that his organisation was temporarily "frozen". Both Thalib and Syihab cited internal reasons for their drastic decisions. But it was apparent that their decisions had been taken in anticipation of the government's new anti-terrorism measures.

FPI insiders claimed that the operatives from the State Intelligence Agency (BIN) had infiltrated their organisation and steered it towards engaging in violent activities. Following the "freezing" they decided to "cleanse" it from outside infiltrators and restructure the entire organisation, including a review of its mission and mode of struggle. However, it was also obvious that Syihab was under heavy pressure to disband his organisation after he was arrested and charged for a number of criminal offences only one week after the Bali tragedy. After intense high-level lobbying, including a personal request from Minister of Religious Affairs Said Aqil Hussein Al-Munawar, Syihab was released as an apparent concession for the disbanding of his organisation.[20] Since then, FPI has practically disappeared from the public scene.

The Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), an organisation founded by Abu Bakar Bashir, raised similar suspicions that BIN operatives had penetrated its network. In December 2002, *Tempo* Magazine, citing insiders' information, reported that a high-ranking BIN operative named Abdul Harris had successfully penetrated the MMI since its inception and had been appointed head of its department of international relations before his true identity was exposed by accident.[21] Some Muslim leaders suspected that intelligence infiltration into a number of hard-line Muslim organisations were aimed at discrediting Islam, an intelligence technique used by the notorious Special Operations (Opsus), the New Order's free-wheeling intelligence agency, to discredit a number of Islamic-based insurgencies in the 1970s and 1980s.[22] But security and intelligence officials maintained that it was standard procedure to control radical activities that posed a potential danger to the wider society.

The disbanding of the Laskar Jihad drew greater attention, due to its militancy and well-structured organisation. Thalib insisted that he was carrying out an instruction from the patron of his organisation, a Saudi Sheikh who had concluded that Indonesian Muslims were no longer in danger. But it is possible that just like Syihab, Thalib might have "traded" his willingness to disband the Laskar Jihad in return for his release from police detention. Thalib had been arrested and tried on charges of defamation of Indonesian leaders and inciting religious hatred, but was declared innocent in January 2003. In November 2002, thousands of former members of the Laskar Jihad left Maluku and Central Sulawesi and returned to their former homes, mostly in Central and East Java. The Indonesian security agencies maintained tight surveillance of these individuals for fear that they would pose security problems in local communities.

The Marriott Bombing: Islamic Extremism Resurfaces

The reduced profile and activity of hard-line Muslim groups post-Bali and the convergence between the government and the society in general on the Iraqi issue contributed to a heated but nonetheless impressively peaceful protest on the ground, when a joint American-British military attack was launched against Iraq in late March 2003. Government officials and religious leaders had worked hand in hand to prevent the war, but when they failed, they quickly worked to prevent the anti-American protest from spilling out of control. The October 12 tragedy had forced them to pay a high price for both security and religious complacency. Whilst the security authorities subsequently improved the previously lax security mechanisms to enable them to handle mass protests effectively, religious leaders engaged the hard-line elements in the community in intensive dialogues, so that the latter realised that the use of violence would only serve to discredit their own cause.

Thus, the newly resurfaced FPI activists, for example, chanted anti-American condemnation side by side with members of the leftist People's Democratic Party (PRD) and both Muslim and non-Muslim protesters in a mass gathering that boasted nearly one million participants in April. And, despite the by-now-familiar anti-American rhetoric, there was no massive recruitment of jihad fighters and no immediate sign of terrorist attacks in the two month-long nation wide display of solidarity for the Iraqis.

In addition, there was also a convergence between international opinion and domestic aspirations in rejecting a unilateral American attack on Iraq. Powerful television images of massive anti-war protests held in a large number of the world's cities and extensive press coverage of deep internal rifts amongst Western states over the Iraqi issue helped to soften the perception amongst Indonesian Muslims that Iraq was another pawn in the Western Crusade against Islam.

The facts that the pro-Iraq protests went peacefully, the trials of both the Bali perpetrators and Abu Bakar Bashir proceeded without major disturbance, and the police had somewhat weakened the terrorist network, raised hopes that terror threats, especially one that had its roots in the radical interpretation of Islam, were at least brought under control.

Against this backdrop, the bombing at the J. W. Marriott hotel in Jakarta on 5 August 2003, that killed twelve people and injured 147 others, brought a deep shock to the Indonesians, particularly because it happened at the time when security had been put on highest alert in conjunction with the annual session of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR). Moreover, the attack

occurred weeks after a series of low-intensity explosions had rocked Jakarta, which the police later blamed on the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) — another source of Indonesia's security instability.

But just like the Bali bombings, the police once again demonstrated its impressive performance in unravelling the terror perpetrators. Three hours after the bombing, Police Chief Gen. Da'i Bachtiar briefed the cabinet session that the modus operandi of the bombing bore significant resemblance to that of the Bali bombings. Two days after that, the police managed to identify the executor of the bombing, Asmar Latin Sani, a young recruit of Jemaah Islamiyah. Less than two weeks later, Gen. Bachtiar announced that the bombing was masterminded by the very same figures that led the Bali bombing operation: two Malaysians by the names of Dr. Azahari Husin and Nordin Mohammed Top.[23] In the meantime, the police arrested twelve suspects in relation to the bombing, including two people who were suspected to have helped its execution.[24]

Whilst the police's performance in conducting diligent detective work has indeed been admirable, the fact that the bombing did happen despite all security precautions and even intercepted information that a terror attack would occur,[25] once again underlined the weakness in Indonesia's security mechanism. This bitter fact later sparked a heated controversy over the need to implement ISA-type legislation in order to provide greater authority to the security and intelligence institutions to prevent and even pre-empt terror. Most security officers, including the moderate and democratically inclined top security minister Gen. (ret.) Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, expressed their support for a stricter law to combat terrorism. In fact, the idea to modify the Anti-Subversion Law, which was repealed in 1999, had actually been proposed shortly after the occurrence of church bombings in December 2000, but was turned down by then Minister of Defence Mohammad Mahfud MD.

However, thanks to Minister of Justice and Human Rights Yusril Mahendra, a constitutional expert and chairman of the hard-line Crescent and Star Party (PBB), who managed to convince his cabinet colleagues of the danger in resurrecting such a draconian law, the proposal was dropped.[26] Instead, Yusril suggested amendments to the Anti-Terrorism Law, which had only been enacted in March, including nine articles on the deterrence of terror and one article on the use of intelligence data to commence investigation.[27]

The government's decision brought some relief as it indicates that it remains committed to upholding democratic principles, whilst at the same time strengthening legal mechanisms to combat terrorism. Most human rights

activists pointed out the fact that Indonesia's ineffectiveness in deterring terror lies more in the institutional incapacity of the security agencies rather than the inadequacy of anti-terror legal mechanisms. Many pointed their fingers at poor co-ordination amongst Indonesia's various intelligence agencies, which despite the issuance of two Presidential Decrees to improve their performance in 2002 has in fact, made relatively little progress.

Interestingly, recent suggestions to invite the military, whose anti-terror units — such as the army's Special Forces Command (Kopassus) — are well-trained in counter-terrorism and its intelligence agency, Bais, possesses greater technical capability than its police counterpart, to play bigger roles in anti-terror operations was rejected by TNI leaders. TNI Chief Gen. Endriartono Sutarto pointed out that according to MPR Decree No. VII/MPR/2000, internal security, including anti-terrorism measures, falls under police jurisdiction. Therefore, the government must ensure that the police are well equipped to handle the job, including allocation of adequate budgets to improve its institutional capability, rather than shifting the burden of maintaining internal security back to the TNI.[28] At one point, Sutarto even suggested to his American counterparts to shift the funding for the IMET (International Military Education Training) — resumed in mid-2002, but its disbursement was deferred due to objections from the US Congress — to help the police instead.[29] Whilst this stance may reflect TNI's reluctance to shoulder more burdens at the time when it is preoccupied with fighting separatism in Aceh, it also indicates that police-military tension resulting from the two institutions' separation in 2000 is finally subsiding — at least amongst their respective leaders.

Nevertheless, any strengthened security measures would arguably be insufficient as they have yet to address one of the root causes of the terror threat: the American factor. There has yet to be any indication that the Marriott bombing was intended as a direct retaliation of the regime change in Baghdad. But the fact that the bombing was allegedly masterminded by the same figures that conducted the Bali operation clearly indicates that anti-American sentiment remains one of the key factors triggering terrorism. During their open trials, all key perpetrators of the Bali bombings declared that their brutal actions were primarily launched as a *jihad* against America and its allies and a fight against moral decadence brought about by the influx of Western tourists in one of the world's most popular tourist destinations.[30]

The Bali trials have yet to demonstrate convincing evidence on the existence of a direct structural link between Jemaah Islamiyah and Al Qaeda, but it was obvious that the former does share the latter's hatred of America. The church

bombings of 2000–2001, which the police have now proved were the works of Jemaah Islamiyah, for example, occurred as a direct consequence of decade-long Muslim-Christian tension that led to the outbreak of the Maluku and Poso conflicts, clearly demonstrating that this international dimension could easily mix up with domestic factors. As a consequence, the widely perceived American subjugation of the Muslim World, which was demonstrated by its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, can stoke the already inflamed ground. And, as has been mentioned by a number of Indonesian Muslim figures, Muslim radicals could ride and manipulate the high wave of anti-American sentiment to further their ends. In a frank media interview, Amrozi, who accepted his death sentence with joyful shouts, warned of the birth of "one million Amrozis" who would carry on his cause after his demise. He even sang a song he composed in prison, in which he clearly said that their struggle would continue as long as "Palestine and Haramain [the holy city of Mecca] are subjugated to American control".

Amrozi's words portend the likelihood of future atrocities. The Marriott bombing sent an alarming signal that despite massive arrests and the systematic break up of its cells, the Jemaah Islamiyah terror network, although severely damaged, appears to be a bigger organisation than previously thought, and therefore, remains dangerous.[31] And, the fact that the bombing was committed, probably by a suicide bomber, in a broad daylight, in the heart of Jakarta's business and diplomatic district, and during the highest security alert, clearly indicates the extreme level of militancy that members of the network are committed to. More seriously, as Chief of Central Java Regional Police Force (*Kapolda Jawa Tengah*) Inspector General Didi Widayadi warned, Jemaah Islamiyah has been trying to penetrate the *pesantrens* and local religious leaders in order to expand their network.[32] Against this backdrop, it is possible that terror threats would intensify if the next regime emerging from the 2004 elections was perceived as toeing the American line. Whilst the current motives of the terrorists are to retaliate against America by attacking American interests, future attacks could well be directed against an Indonesian government perceived as serving an American agenda.

Although the future scenario seems to be less than rosy, there is still a silver lining in the clouds. Unlike the Bali bombings, the Marriott bombing claimed the lives of ordinary Indonesians — only one out of the twelve dead was a foreigner — thus bringing home the frightening fact that terror could be directed against "us", not only against "them". Thus, unlike the prolonged controversy about the perpetrators of the Bali bombings, most Indonesians appeared to accept the police explanation that Jemaah Islamiyah might have

been behind the Marriott bombings. More Muslims are now convinced that religious extremism does exist and poses threats to their community, a positive trend that, as has been mentioned earlier, has developed ever since the Bali bombings. It was no wonder then that all mass organisations, irrespective of their inclinations, including even the FPI and MMI, condemned the brutal attack at the hotel J. W. Marriott.

This positive reaction should serve as a key towards engaging the public to participate in the anti-terror measures, for without their participation no security mechanisms will be effective enough to prevent terror attacks in the vast archipelago. Also importantly, as the "religiously-inspired" terror derives from twisted and violent interpretations of Islam, it would be logical to suggest that combating such extremist interpretations is vitally important.

Conclusion

The American-led attack on Iraq has had broad implications for Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation. Despite the fact that anti-war protests went peacefully, it left a lingering, if not amplified, anti-American sentiment, borne out by a combination of deep-seated resentment against perceived US subjugation of both national sovereignty and the Muslim World. As two major terrorist attacks, i.e., the Bali bombings of 12 October 2002 and the Marriott bombing of 5 August 2003, were deliberately targeted against American interests, it is not unlikely that the radical Islamists would take advantage of anti-US sentiment to further their ends.

Therefore, it is important to deal with the new challenges in a more comprehensive approach. A conventional security strategy would definitely be insufficient, as the terrorists operate in an unconventional fashion, rather like a guerrilla war in military terms. As the cases of the Bali and Marriott bombings clearly demonstrate, even if a terrorist cell is broken up, another cell regenerates and resurfaces. Thus, besides improving the police's capability to investigate the aftermath of a terror attack, it is equally important — if not more so — to enhance the ability to prevent and even pre-empt terror acts. This means not just an enhancement of physical capabilities — which could be achieved through better intelligence co-ordination and close co-operation in the global fight against terrorism — but also the social ability to engage the public, especially the Muslim community, so that it accepts the anti-terror measures as a home made agenda, not an American-imposed one.

In broader terms, a two-track strategy could be applied, although it will require a redefinition of what constitutes "terror" and "terrorism" — which

is now defined largely through a singular American lens — to address the roots of religious-inspired terrorism. Under the first track, Muslim leaders and their non-Muslim counterparts need to accelerate concerted efforts to combat religious extremism within their respective communities through both intra-religious and inter-religious dialogues and other programmes. This strategy may not eliminate terror activities, but at least, if all religious leaders manage to protect their respective "territories" they would be able to prevent terrorist penetration to secure more militant recruits.

The second track is to ease "the American factor", declared by terror perpetrators as their justification in waging war against America, which is obviously more difficult given President George W. Bush's short sighted "either with us or with the enemy" paradigm. However, Indonesian Muslim leaders and their non-Muslim counterparts could still work closely in global religious and cultural dialogues to achieve more balanced Western-Islam relations. Through these dialogues they could encourage their respective governments to apply multiples lenses in viewing Islamic extremism, rather than simply relying heavily on military might, which instead of draining the swamp of terrorism, could trigger a vicious cycle of violence and help to generate more Muslim militants.

Accordingly, the Indonesian government could improve its working relationship with its American counterpart to achieve a more balanced counter-terror approach. Whilst the Indonesian side demonstrates its closer engagement in the global fight against terrorism, it needs also to work on international diplomacy initiatives for the settlement of global Muslim issues such as the quest for a sovereign Palestinian state and an end to the American occupation of Iraq. Although such an initiative would prove difficult given Indonesia's weakened international standing, it would ease domestic resentment against the perceived American subjugation of the national government. In return, Washington needs to change its perception that Indonesia belongs to the "other side" in the war on terror, and demonstrate its sensitivity towards the domestic outcry against its perceived dominance, and work to convince both the Indonesian elite and the public that terrorism is a universal threat. After all, wisdom teaches us that co-operation is always better than prolonged confrontation.

Notes

1. The parliament passed two provisional anti-terrorism regulations into laws on 6 March 2003, despite objections from two House factions. However, Minister

of Justice and Human Rights Yusril Mahendra stated that the government would propose an amendment on some controversial clauses, including the widely criticised provision for the use of intelligence information to start investigations on terrorist activities.

2. Contrary to what has been widely believed, rejection of Megawati's original presidential candidacy was not due to her gender, but due to a widespread perception that she was anti-Islam. Some Muslim leaders began to doubt her piety when she was photographed in prayer before a Hindu ceremony in Bali, whilst she was rarely seen at Islamic gatherings held at *pesantrens.* Their suspicion seemed to be confirmed when her party's provisional list of legislative candidates submitted ahead of the 1999 parliamentary elections were dominated by non-Muslim candidates, although in its final list the composition was greatly altered. When after leading her party to win a majority of votes in the 1999 elections she failed to demonstrate an intention to accommodate Muslim interests, her Muslim rivals decided to forge an alliance to block her way to the presidency. Of all major Muslim parties, only the United Development Party (PPP) declared its rejection of a woman ruler, citing a religious ruling (*fatwa*) delivered by a group of *habaib* (Muslim clerics of Arab descent and descendants of the Prophet) associated with the party. The *habaibs* quoted a supposedly valid *hadith* (the Prophet's sayings and deeds) that barred women from assuming political leadership. But recent studies question the validity of the *hadith*, claiming that it was fabricated long after the Prophet's death. See, for example, Fatima Mernissi, *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992). Ironically, the chairman of PPP, Hamzah Haz, agreed to amend the *fatwa* when he accepted Megawati's offer to become her Vice President in July 2001.
3. "Serangan Terhadap Irak Akan Rugikan Indonesia", *Kompas*, 10 January 2003.
4. Interview, Hussein Umar, Secretay General of DDII, 9 January 2003.
5. Interview, M. Ismail Yusanto, spoke person for Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, 13 January 2003.
6. "Gently Turning the Heat Up", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 October 2002. Bashir was eventually arrested on 20 October 2002, one week after the Bali bombings, in an apparent move to appease international criticism. He was charged with a series of criminal offenses, including involvement in church bombings in 2000, attempts at assassinating Megawati and violation of immigration regulations. But on 21 February 2003, a day before his detention expired, the police transferred him to the detention of the Attorney General's Office (AGO), which altered the charges against him. The AGO dropped the first two charges and replaced them with "subversion against the legitimate government" but maintained the charge of immigration violation. Bashir's lawyers accused the police of lacking evidence to implicate their client and petitioned against the changes.
7. On the details of the Musharraf Scenario debate, see, Tatik S. Hafidz, *The War On Terror and The Future of Indonesian Democracy*, IDSS Working Paper

No. 46, March 2003 (Singapore: Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, March 2003).

8. "A Sense of Urgency Needed", *The Jakarta Post*, 11 November 2002.
9. See, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, "*Tantangan Politik, Keamanan dan Perdamaian Tahun 2003*", *Kompas*, 6 January 2003.
10. For details on the police investigation that led to Amrozi's arrest, see Pusat Data CONCERN, *Bom Bali, Buku Putih Tidak Resmi Investigasi Teror Bom Bali* (Jakarta: Pensil-324, 2002).
11. "Nyanyian Pengebom Bersandal Jepit", *Tempo*, 23 February 2003.
12. "Polisi Tangkap 10 Anggota JI Perampok Bank Lippo", *Kompas*, 22 June 2003.
13. "Polisi Temukan Ribuan Amunisi Dan Bahan Peledak Milik Jemaah Islamiyah", *Kompas,* 11 July 2003.
14. "Moderate Muslim Leader Warns US on Terror Backlash", *The Jakarta Post*, 23 September 2002.
15. Interview, Hasyim Muzadi, 28 December 2002.
16. "MUI: Tangkap Otak Peledakan Bom Marriot", *Kompas*, 10 August 2003.
17. See articles by Syafii Maarif, chairman of Muhammadiyah, and K. H. Cholil Bisri, a respected NU *ulama*, titled "Radikalisme Agama" and "Air Mata Darah" respectively, which appeared in *Tempo*, 22 December 2002.
18. Personal communication.
19. On the details of the Darul Islam revolt, see Cornelis van Dijk, *Darul Islam, Sebuah Pemberontakan* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1993) and Holk H. Dengel, *Darul Islam dan Kartosuwirjo, Langkah Perwujudan Angan Angan Yang Gagal* (Jakarta: Pustaka Sinar Harapan, 1995). And, for a concise analysis of the roots of Islamic radicalism in Indonesia and profiles of radical groups, see Martin van Bruinessen, "Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia", *Southeast Asian Research*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2002), pp. 144–157, available at <www.let.uu.nl/~Martin.vanBruinessen/personal/publicaties.html>.
20. Personal communication. It is said that shortly after the 12 October bombings, an influential political figure made a phone call to Minister Munawar. During the informal conversation, the prominent figure lashed out against those "radical Arabs" — who happened to be leaders of radical Muslim groups such as the FPI, the Laskar Jihad and the MMI — whom he suspected to have been involved in the bombings. He blurted out that those "radical Arabs" might need to be treated like the ethnic Chinese (*di-Cina-kan*), referring to the 12 May 1998 tragedy, during which many Indonesian Chinese were subjected to violence and human rights abuses. Munawar, who happens to be of Arab origin too, took the statement seriously. He was said to have approached Syihab and other leaders of hard-line Muslim organisations and persuaded them to "behave themselves". For an interesting feature on Indonesian Arabs who lead hard-line groups, see, "The Past Catches Up", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 14 November 2002. Syihab, however, was

re-arrested in May 2003 and subsequently brought to trial. On 11 August, the judge sentenced him to seven months imprisonment. Syihab appealed to the high court against the verdict.

21. Interview, Hussein Umar, 9 January 2003. According to Umar, Harris' true identity was exposed when several Muslim leaders met him at a religious gathering held at the house of Maj.-Gen. Muchdi P. R., the deputy Head of BIN. Muchdi introduced Harris, whom they knew as a member of MMI, as "BIN operative". Interestingly, Harris was known to have helped Omar Al-Faruq to obtain false identities during his stay in Indonesia. He also accompanied Al-Faruq, when the alleged Al Qaeda operative, whose controversial confession later forced the US securities to issue an "Orange alert" in September 2002, was arrested. See also "Jejak Intelijen di Balik Al-Faruq", *Tempo*, 25 November–1 December 2002.
22. For a reference on the New Order's intelligence agencies, see Richard Tanter, *Intelligence Agencies and Third World Militarisation: A Case Study of Indonesia, 1966–1989.* PhD Thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 1991.
23. "Pelaku Peledakan Bom Bali Pimpin Peledakan di JW Marriott", *Kompas*, 19 August 2003.
24. "Dua Lagi Tersangka Diciduk", *Jawa Pos*, 28 August 2003.
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